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A SWIMMER'S DREAM.

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Somno mollior unda.

I.

DAWN is dim on the dark soft water,
Soft and passionate, dark and sweet.
Love's own self was the deep sea's daughter
Fair and flawless from face to feet,
Hailed of all when the world was golden,
Loved of lovers whose names beholden
Thrill men's eyes as with light of olden
Days more glad than their flight was fleet.

So they sang: but for men that love her,
Souls that hear not her word in vain,
Earth beside her and heaven above her
Seem but shadows that wax and wane.
Softer than sleep's are the sea's caresses,
Kinder than love's that betrays and blesses,
Blither than spring's when her flowerful tresses
Shake forth sunlight and shine with rain.

All the strength of the waves that perish
Swells beneath me and laughs and sighs,
Sighs for love of the life they cherish,
Laughs to know that it lives and dies,

Dies for joy of its life, and lives
Thrilled with joy that its brief death gives—
Death whose laugh or whose breath forgives
Change that bids it subside and rise.

II.

Hard and heavy, remote but nearing,
Sunless hangs the severe sky's weight,
Cloud on cloud, though the wind be veering,
Heaped on high to the sundawn's gate.
Dawn and even and noon are one,
Veiled with vapour and void of sun;
Nought in sight or in fancied hearing
Now less mighty than time or fate.

The grey sky gleams and the grey seas glimmer,
Pale and sweet as a dream's delight,
As a dream's where darkness and light seem dimmer,
Touched by dawn or subdued by night.
The dark wind, stern and sublime and sad,
Swings the rollers to westward, clad
With lustrous shadow that lures the swimmer,
Lures and lulls him with dreams of light.

Light, and sleep, and delight, and wonder,
Change, and rest, and a charm of cloud,
Fill the world of the skies whereunder
Heaves and quivers and pants aloud
All the world of the waters, hoary
Now, but clothed with its own live glory,
That mates the lightning and mocks the thunder
With light more living and word more proud.

III.

Far off westward, whither sets the sounding strife,
  Strife more sweet than peace, of shoreless waves whose glee
  Scorns the shore and loves the wind that leaves them free,
Strange as sleep and pale as death and fair as life,
  Shifts the moonlight-coloured sunshine on the sea.

Toward the sunset's goal the sunless waters crowd,
  Fast as autumn days toward winter: yet it seems
  Here that autumn wanes not, here that woods and streams
Lose not heart and change not likeness, chilled and bowed,
  Warped and wrinkled: here the days are fair as dreams.

IV.

O russet-robed November,
  What ails thee so to smile?
Chill August, pale September,
  Endured a woeful while,
And fell as falls an ember
  From forth a flameless pile:
But golden-girt November
  Bids all she looks on smile.

The lustrous foliage, waning
  As wanes the morning moon,
Here falling, here refraining,
  Outbraves the pride of June
With statelier semblance, feigning
  No fear lest death be soon:
As though the woods thus waning
  Should wax to meet the moon.

As though, when fields lie stricken
By grey December's breath,
These lordlier growths that sicken
And die for fear of death
Should feel the sense requicken
That hears what springtide saith
And thrills for love, spring-stricken
And pierced with April's breath.

The keen white-winged north-easter
That stings and spurs thy sea
Doth yet but feed and feast her
With glowing sense of glee:
Calm chained her, storm released her,
And storm's glad voice was he:
South-wester or north-easter,
Thy winds rejoice the sea.

V.

A dream, a dream is it all—the season,
The sky, the water, the wind, the shore?
A day-born dream of divine unreason,
A marvel moulded of sleep—no more?
For the cloudlike wave that my limbs while cleaving
Feel as in slumber beneath them heaving,
Soothes the sense as to slumber, leaving
Sense of nought that was known of yore.

A purer passion, a lordlier leisure,
A peace more happy than lives on land,
Fulfils with pulse of diviner pleasure
The dreaming head and the steering hand.

I lean my cheek to the cold grey pillow,
The deep soft swell of the full broad billow,
And close mine eyes for delight past measure,
And wish the wheel of the world would stand.

The wild-winged hour that we fain would capture
Falls as from heaven that its light feet clomb,
So brief, so soft, and so full the rapture
Was felt that soothed me with sense of home.
To sleep, to swim, and to dream, for ever—
Such joy the vision of man saw never;
For here too soon will a dark day sever
The sea-bird's wing from the sea-wave's foam.

A dream, and more than a dream, and dimmer
At once and brighter than dreams that flee,
The moment's joy of the seaward swimmer
Abides, remembered as truth may be.
Not all the joy and not all the glory
Must fade as leaves when the woods wax hoary;
For there the downs and the woodlands glimmer,
And here to south of them swells the sea.

ALGERNON CHARLES SWINBURNE.

CANDOUR IN ENGLISH FICTION.

I.

FICTION, like every other fine art, covers the whole area of life: it is concerned with every passion, every emotion; with every kind of joy and every kind of suffering; with man on a throne or man on a dunghill; with man in purple robes or man in tattered duds. Every conceivable situation of life, every possible phase, every experience: the greatest heights and the lowest depths: the greatest splendours and the blackest miseries: the short-lived Heaven which man and woman sometimes make for themselves; or the Hell of their own devising—all belongs to the art of Fiction. The only thing required of the artist is that his subject shall be adapted to artistic treatment and artistically treated.

This is mere commonplace. But, when questions are raised about narrowness in Art, it is as well to begin by reminding ourselves of the things which lie at the foundation—the things elementary. The world needs to be reminded sometimes that two and two make four. To those who ask why Fiction should be confined within certain bounds, why it should be forbidden to include this or that part of life, the reply is that there are no bounds whatever to the domain of Fiction. She may roam over the whole wide world: she may treat of men and women under any conditions: she may take up any subject. There is but the one condition of artistic fitness. Every artist is free, absolutely free, to exercise his own art in his own way. That is to say, in his own studio and in his own *cénacle*, he is free. It is when he works for exhibition: for the public: for pay or hire: that limitations come in. Then he finds bounds and hedges beyond which, if he chooses to stray, it is at his own peril. These limits are assigned by an authority known

as Average Opinion. They may be narrow, because Average Opinion is generally a Philistine. Those who wish to enlarge these boundaries or to remove them altogether must educate and enlarge Average Opinion. In the matter of painting so much has lately been achieved in the enlargement of opinion that those who attempt a similar task in literature may be of good cheer.

He who works for pay must respect the prejudices of his customers: otherwise, he will have few. Some men may be so courageous as to defy these prejudices: others, wiser, may lay themselves out to remove them, if they can. Others, wiser still, will inquire how these prejudices have arisen and what they mean.

Those who demand a wider range for English Fiction desire chiefly, it is understood, a greater freedom in the treatment of Love. Certainly there is no other passion which yields to an artist such boundless possibilities. Without Love, the whole of life is insipid. Without Love, all Art perishes. In Love's escort march all the Emotions: they follow in pairs—each with its opposite. Tenderness with Rage: Truth with Treachery: Joy with Grief. Why should not writers, it is asked, treat of Love in freedom—Love according to the laws of Nature? Love existed before the Church invented a sacrament and called it marriage. The history of mankind is the history of Love. Why restrict those who ask for nothing but a free hand?

Here, however, Average Opinion says, or seems to say: "If you treat of Love, save as Love obedient to the laws of Society, we will have none of you." Average Opinion cannot explain this position. Were it more articulate it would be able to give its reasons. It would go on to say, in short: "Modern Society is based upon the unit of the family. The family tie means, absolutely, that the man and the woman are indissolubly united and can only be parted by the shame and disgrace of one or the other. In order to protect the wife and the children, and to keep the family together, we have made stringent laws as to marriage. To make these laws more binding we have allowed the Church to invent for marriage so solemn and sacred a function that most women have come to believe that the Church ceremony constitutes true marriage. The preservation of the family is at the very foundation of our social

system. As for the freedom of love which you want to treat in your books, it strikes directly at the family. If men and women are free to rove, there can be no family: if there is no fidelity in marriage, the family drops to pieces. Therefore, we will have none of your literature of free and adulterous Love."

In fact, they will not have it. Average Opinion cannot be resisted. The circulating libraries refuse to distribute such books. They may be sold in certain shops, but not in those where the British Matron buys her books. The railway stalls will not display them. Worse than all, the author becomes liable to a criminal prosecution, which is painful and humiliating. Then those who demand greater freedom cry out upon the world for hypocrisy. "Ye are like," they say, "unto whited sepulchres, which are indeed beautiful outward but are within full of all uncleanness. The Press teems daily with proofs, open and manifest, of the existence of free and illegal Love: the very thing of which you will not suffer us to speak has seized upon every rank of society: nay, there has never been a time when the artificial restrictions of social and ecclesiastical law have been obeyed: there has never been any country in which they have been obeyed. You go on prating of social purity. It does not exist. It never has existed. And you think that men's mouths, or women's either, are to be stopped by your prudery and hypocrisy."

Average Opinion is not credited with having much to say in reply. For these charges are partly true, though the exaggerations are indeed enormous. So far as we pretend to social purity as a nation we are indeed hypocrites. But to set up a standard of purity and to advocate it is not hypocrisy. This country, and the remnant still surviving of the New England stock, stand almost alone in the maintenance of such a standard. As for the widespread laxity alleged, it is not true. Certainly, there is a chapter in the lives of many men which they would not willingly publish. But in almost every such case the chapter is closed and is never reopened after the man has contracted the responsibilities of marriage. And as for the women—those above a certain level—*there is never any closed chapter at all in their lives.* When we talk of hypocrisies, let us not forget that the cultured class of

British women—a vast and continually increasing class—are entirely to be trusted. Rare, indeed, is it that an Englishman of this class is jealous of his wife: never does he suspect his bride.

These considerations will perhaps explain the attitude of Average Opinion towards the literature of Free Love. Any novelist may write what he pleases: he may make an artistic picture of any materials he chooses; but he will not generally find, if he crosses certain boundaries, that his books will be distributed by Mudie or Smith. It is with him, then, if he desires to treat of things forbidden, a question of money—shall he restrict his pencil or shall he restrict his purse?

There is, however, one more answer to the accusation of narrowness. Is English Fiction narrow? Is the treatment of ungoverned passion absolutely forbidden? Then what of George Eliot, Charles Reade, Wilkie Collins, Nathaniel Hawthorne, Mrs. Gaskell—not to speak of living writers? Can any writer demand greater freedom than has been taken by the authors of *Adam Bede*, *A Terrible Temptation*, *Ruth*, or *The Scarlet Letter?* With these examples before him, no one, surely, ought to complain that he is not permitted to treat of Love free and disobedient. The author, however, must recognise in his work the fact that such Love is outside the social pale and is destructive of the very basis of society. He *must*. This is not a law laid down by that great authority, Average Opinion, but by Art herself, who will not allow the creation of impossible figures moving in an unnatural atmosphere. Those writers who yearn to treat of the adulteress and the courtesan because they love to dwell on images of lust are best kept in check by existing discouragements. The modern Elephantis may continue to write in French.

WALTER BESANT.

II.

OF all the writers of fiction in Europe or America the English are the most restricted in their choice of subjects. The result is shown in the pitiable poverty of the ordinary novel, the wearisome repetition of the same themes, and the consequent popularity of romances which, not pretending to deal with life as it is, at the least leave no sense of disappointment in their portrayal or of superficiality in their handling. The British Matron is the true censor of the Press, and exerts over fiction the repressive power she has tried to exert over Art. Things as they are—human nature as it is—the conflict always going on between law and passion, the individual and society—she will not have spoken of. She permits certain crimes to be not only described, but dilated on and gloated over. Murder, forgery, lies, and all forms of hate and malevolence she does not object to; but no one must touch the very fringes of uncertificated love under pain of the greater and the lesser excommunication. Hence, the subjects lying to the hand of the British novelist are woefully limited, and the permissible area of the conflict between humanity and society is daily diminishing. Difference of race was a good theme in its time, and the Jew and the Gentile could sigh and weep and struggle through their allotted pages with a fair amount of tragic life-likeness. But now Jew and Gentile run together like two drops of quicksilver, and there are but few Roses of Sharon who would refuse to engraft themselves on an unbelieving stem if that stem stood in an aristocratic garden and they got social rank in return for their modern ducats. The fashion of Ritualism has smoothed the way between the Roman Catholic and the Protestant; and though something more by way of variant is to be made out of Agnosticism and Orthodoxy, still, that theme has been worked so much of late that it will scarcely bear repetition. Politics, too, are so far ameliorated as to be no real obstacle; and Unionists and Home Rulers meet in the pages of a novel, and make a good job of things before the last page is turned. The East End has been a fruitful field in its way,

and the sorrows of the poor form the staple of all that smaller kind of literature which is issued by religious and quasi-religious societies. But when taken as a theme by serious fiction writers the British Matron has here again her say, and things have to be depicted ideally with gingerly caution and in white-kid gloves, and by no means with the brutal frankness of Zolaesque truth.

If a writer, disdaining the unwritten law, leaps the barriers set up by Mrs. Grundy and ventures into the forbidden Garden of Roses, he is boycotted by all respectable libraries and the severer kind of booksellers, and his works, though they sell in large numbers, are bought in a manner surreptitiously. Lord Campbell's Act has a wider moral interpretation than even legal power; yet that legal power is strong enough, as more than one insurgent has been made to feel of late.

All this is the outcome of the question: To whom ought Fiction to be addressed?—exclusively to the Young Person? or may not men and women, who know life, have their acre to themselves where the *ingénue* has no business to intrude? Must men go without meat because the babes must be fed with milk? Or, because men must have meat, shall the babes be poisoned with food too strong for them to digest? I, for one, am emphatically in favour of specialised literature. Just as we have children's books and medical books, so ought we to have literature fit for the Young Person and literature which gives men and women pictures of life as it is. Had the law which is in favour at the present day been the law of times past we should have lost some of our finest works; and the world would have been so much the poorer in consequence. But would any sane person propose to banish Fielding and Swift and Smollett and Richardson from our libraries, and Bowdlerise all our editions of Shakespeare, and purify the Bible from passages which once were simple everyday facts, that no one was ashamed to discuss, and now are nameless indecencies impossible to be even alluded to, because these are not the fit kind of reading for boys and girls in their teens? With this excessive scrupulosity in fiction we publish the most revolting details in the daily Press; and we let our boys and girls read every paper that comes into the house. If even we debar them from these, with the large amount of uncompanioned liberty they have at the present

day, and a penny or even a halfpenny in their pockets, they may sup full of horrors and improprieties, as now the details of some ghastly murder, now those of some highly-coloured divorce suit, sell the papers in the streets and stir up the public imagination. And again, with the new development of education our young Girton girls may study Juvenal and Catullus in the original, and laugh over the plain speaking of Aristophanes; while French novels, of which the translation lands a man in prison, may be sold by their hundreds in the original language wherein every decently educated girl is a proficient.

The whole thing results from the muddle and the compromise which English morality so delights to make. The British Matron must have a scapegoat whom she sends into the desert laden with a few uncongenial sins, while she keeps all the rest in safe custody in her tents. She must have a whipping-boy for the encouragement of her pupils. In literature this is the seventh commandment in all its forms and ramifications when discussed in the native tongue. Uncandid and also hypocritical, this attitude exposes us as a nation to both ridicule and blame. With a Press so rampantly unmuzzled —with editors of evening papers who go into the most disgusting and minute details of things which are, which have been done, and which, therefore, can be imitated—we fall foul of the writer who takes for his motive the subject of unlawful love, though he handles it with scrupulous delicacy and in the broadest manner of indication rather than description. We cut ourselves off from one of the largest and most important areas of that human life we pretend to portray, and we throw the limelight of fancy on crimes which are of comparatively rare occurrence, and which consequently excite but little living sympathy. How many respectable men in England have committed a murder for which they have allowed another man to suffer? How many women have set fire to houses in the hope of burning to death an inconvenient witness of their past folly? Who among us has destroyed a will and so come into money and estates to which we have no right? Which of us is personating a dead man? In whose house is that mad woman kept out of sight of the world? And where do we find the domestic burglar who roams about the passages o' nights,

acting the family ghost for nefarious reasons connected with sliding panels and secret treasures? These things are rare in real life, though so prolific as themes for novels. But what is not rare is the "treacherous inclination" which either discounts or overleaps the authorisation of society, or which bravely beats down the rebellious instinct and suffers heart-break rather than social shame.

Truth to human nature and faithful presentation of the realities of human life are one thing; licentiousness of description and plain speaking which is indecent are another. Those who most warmly advocate the view of the first in our fictitious literature, if indeed it is to be taken as a true picture of the world and society, would be most strenuously opposed to the last. Take the greatest master of analytical fiction and the boldest handler of themes we have ever had—Balzac—I do not remember at this moment more than one or two pages which would come under the head of licentiousness. I know him pretty well; but if there are many of this kind I have clean forgotten them. His subjects are another matter. But an English Balzac would be hunted out of social life as well as out of literary existence, and his success would be only of the surreptitious hole-and-corner kind which includes shame as well as secresy—shame to both author and reader alike. The thousand and one life-like touches which make Balzac's portraits real would be impossible in an English novel. Mrs. Grundy would be up in arms; and all the heads of houses would be incensed, because their young people might be initiated before their time, into certain mysteries of life which should be kept hidden from them. To which objection there is but the repetition of the former argument: Why should these young people be allowed to read books which are not meant for them, when they have more than enough literature of their own?

In olden days, and I should imagine in all well-ordered houses still, the literature which was meant for men was kept on certain prohibited bookshelves of the library, or in the locked bookcase for greater security. The Young Person was warned off these shelves. If her discretion was not to be trusted and her word of honour was only a shaky security, the locked bookcase made all safe. Here the father kept his masculine literature; his translations of certain classical authors; his ethnological and some scientific books; his

popular surgical, medical, and anatomical works; perhaps some speculative philosophies of an upsetting tendency; and all the virile work of the last and preceding centuries. To the Young Person were free Jane Austen and Sir Walter Scott, Miss Mitford and Miss Edgeworth, "Evelina," Fenimore Cooper, Marryat, G. P. R. James, and many others in the immediate past, with the largest proportion of the writers of fiction in the present day. If two or three here and there attempted the bow of Ulysses and tried on the mantle of Balzac, his, or more probably her books went into the closed compartment and the Young Person was no whit the worse. And this seems to me a better way all round and a finer kind of safeguarding than the emasculation of all fictitious literature down to the level of boys and girls; and the consequent presentation of human life in stories which are no truer to that human life than so many fairy tales dealing with griffins and flying dragons, good genii and malevolent old witches. The result of our present system of uncandid reticence, of make-believe innocence in one line with impossible villainies in others—the working response made to the demand of the British Matron for fairy tales, not facts—is that, with a few notable exceptions, our fictitious literature is the weakest of all at this present time, the most insincere, the most jejune, the least impressive, and the least tragic. It is wholly wanting in dignity, in grandeur, in the essential spirit of immortality. Written for the inclusion of the Young Person among its readers, it does not go beyond the schoolgirl standard. It may be charming, as the shy and budding miss is charming; but that smell of bread and butter spoils all quite as much as the smell of the apoplexy spoilt the Archbishop's discourse. Thus we have the queer anomaly of a strong-headed and masculine nation cherishing a feeble, futile, milk-and-water literature—of a truthful and straightforward race accepting the most transparent humbug as pictures of human life. A great king may make himself a hobby-horse for his children to ride on pickaback, but a great nation should be candid and truthful in art as well as in life, and mature men and women should not sacrifice truth and common-sense in literature for the sake of the Young Person. The locked bookcase is better.

E. Lynn Linton.

III.

EVEN imagination is the slave of stolid circumstance; and the unending flow of inventiveness which finds expression in the literature of Fiction is no exception to the general law. It is conditioned by its surroundings like a river-stream. The varying character and strength of literary creation at different times may, indeed, at first sight seem to be the symptoms of some inherent, arbitrary, and mysterious variation; but if it were possible to compute, as in mechanics, the units of power or faculty, revealed and unrevealed, that exist in the world at stated intervals, an approximately even supply would probably be disclosed. At least there is no valid reason for a contrary supposition. Yet of the inequality in its realisations there can be no question; and the discrepancy would seem to lie in contingencies which, at one period, doom high expression to dumbness and encourage the lower forms, and at another call forth the best in expression and silence triviality.

That something of this is true has indeed been pretty generally admitted in relation to art-products of various other kinds. But when observers and critics remark, as they often do remark, that the great bulk of English fiction of the present day is characterised by its lack of sincerity, they usually omit to trace this serious defect to external, or even eccentric causes. They connect it with an assumption that the attributes of insight, conceptive power, imaginative emotion, are distinctly weaker nowadays than at particular epochs of earlier date. This may or may not be the case to some degree; but, on considering the conditions under which our popular fiction is produced, imaginative deterioration can hardly be deemed the sole or even chief explanation why such an undue proportion of this sort of literature is in England a literature of quackery.

By a sincere school of Fiction we may understand a Fiction that expresses truly the views of life prevalent in its time, by means of a selected chain of action best suited for their exhibition. What are the prevalent views of life just now is a question upon which it is not necessary to enter further than to suggest that the most

natural method of presenting them, the method most in accordance with the views themselves, seems to be by a procedure mainly impassive in its tone and tragic in its developments.

Things move in cycles; dormant principles renew themselves, and exhausted principles are thrust by. There is a revival of the artistic instincts towards great dramatic motives—setting forth that "collision between the individual and the general"—formerly worked out with such force by the Periclean and Elizabethan dramatists, to name no other. More than this, the periodicity which marks the course of taste in civilised countries does not take the form of a true cycle of repetition, but what Comte, in speaking of general progress, happily characterises as "a looped orbit": not a movement of revolution but—to use the current word—evolution. Hence, in perceiving that taste is arriving anew at the point of high tragedy, writers are conscious that its revived presentation demands enrichment by further truths—in other words, original treatment: treatment which seeks to show Nature's unconsciousness not of essential laws, but of those laws framed merely as social expedients by humanity, without a basis in the heart of things; treatment which expresses the triumph of the crowd over the hero, of the commonplace majority over the exceptional few.

But originality makes scores of failures for one final success, precisely because its essence is to acknowledge no immediate precursor or guide. It is probably to these inevitable conditions of further acquisition that may be attributed some developments of naturalism in French novelists of the present day, and certain crude results from meritorious attempts in the same direction by intellectual adventurers here and there among our own authors.

Anyhow, conscientious fiction alone it is which can excite a reflective and abiding interest in the minds of thoughtful readers of mature age, who are weary of puerile inventions and famishing for accuracy; who consider that, in representations of the world, the passions ought to be proportioned as in the world itself. This is the interest which was excited in the minds of the Athenians by their immortal tragedies, and in the minds of Londoners at the first performance of the finer plays of three hundred years ago. They reflected life, revealed life, criticised life. Life being a phy-

siological fact, its honest portrayal must be largely concerned with, for one thing, the relations of the sexes, and the substitution for such catastrophes as favour the false colouring best expressed by the regulation finish that "they married and were happy ever after," of catastrophes based upon sexual relationship as it is. To this expansion English society opposes a well-nigh insuperable bar.

The popular vehicles for the introduction of a novel to the public have grown to be, from one cause and another, the magazine and the circulating library; and the object of the magazine and circulating library is not upward advance but lateral advance; to suit themselves to what is called household reading, which means, or is made to mean, the reading either of the majority in a household or of the household collectively. The number of adults, even in a large household, being normally two, and these being the members which, as a rule, have least time on their hands to bestow on current literature, the taste of the majority can hardly be, and seldom is, tempered by the ripe judgment which desires fidelity. However, the immature members of a household often keep an open mind, and they might, and no doubt would, take sincere fiction with the rest but for another condition, almost generally co-existent: which is that adults who would desire true views for, their own reading insist, for a plausible but questionable reason. upon false views for the reading of their young people.

As a consequence, the magazine in particular and the circulating library in general do not foster the growth of the novel which reflects and reveals life. They directly tend to exterminate it by monopolising all literary space. Cause and effect were never more clearly conjoined, though commentators upon the result, both French and English, seem seldom if ever to trace their connection. A sincere and comprehensive sequence of the ruling passions, however moral in its ultimate bearings, must not be put on paper as the foundation of imaginative works, which have to claim notice through the above-named channels, though it is extensively welcomed in the form of newspaper reports. That the magazine and library have arrogated to themselves the dispensation of fiction is not the fault of the authors, but of circumstances over which they, as representatives of Grub Street, have no control.

What this practically amounts to is that the patrons of literature—no longer Peers with a taste—acting under the censorship of prudery, rigorously exclude from the pages they regulate subjects that have been made, by general approval of the best judges, the bases of the finest imaginative compositions since literature rose to the dignity of an art. The crash of broken commandments is as necessary an accompaniment to the catastrophe of a tragedy as the noise of drum and cymbals to a triumphal march. But the crash of broken commandments shall not be heard; or, if at all, but gently, like the roaring of Bottom—gently as any sucking dove, or as 'twere any nightingale, lest we should fright the ladies out of their wits. More precisely, an arbitrary proclamation has gone forth that certain picked commandments of the ten shall be preserved intact—to wit, the first, third, and seventh; that the ninth shall be infringed but gingerly; the sixth only as much as necessary; and the remainder alone as much as you please, in a genteel manner.

It is in the self-consciousness engendered by interference with spontaneity, and in aims at a compromise to square with circumstances, that the real secret lies of the charlatanry pervading so much of English fiction. It may be urged that abundance of great and profound novels might be written which should require no compromising, contain not an episode deemed questionable by prudes. This I venture to doubt. In a ramification of the profounder passions the treatment of which makes the great style, something "unsuitable" is sure to arise; and then comes the struggle with the literary conscience. The opening scenes of the would-be great story may, in a rash moment, have been printed in some popular magazine before the remainder is written; as it advances month by month the situations develop, and the writer asks himself, what will his characters do next? What would probably happen to them, given such beginnings? On his life and conscience, though he had not foreseen the thing, only one event could possibly happen, and that therefore he should narrate, as he calls himself a faithful artist. But, though pointing a fine moral, it is just one of those issues which are not to be mentioned in respectable magazines and select libraries. The dilemma then confronts him, he must either whip and scourge those characters into doing something contrary to

their natures, to produce the spurious effect of their being in harmony with social forms and ordinances, or, by leaving them alone to act as they will, he must bring down the thunders of respectability upon his head, not to say ruin his editor, his publisher, and himself.

What he often does, indeed can scarcely help doing in such a strait, is, belie his literary conscience, do despite to his best imaginative instincts by arranging a *dénouement* which he knows to be indescribably unreal and meretricious, but dear to the Grundyist and subscriber. If the true artist ever weeps it probably is then, when he first discovers the fearful price that he has to pay for the privilege of writing in the English language—no less a price than the complete extinction, in the mind of every mature and penetrating reader, of sympathetic belief in his personages.

To say that few of the old dramatic masterpieces, if newly published as a novel (the form which, experts tell us, they would have taken in modern conditions), would be tolerated in English magazines and libraries is a ludicrous understatement. Fancy a brazen young Shakespeare of our time—*Othello*, *Hamlet*, or *Anthony and Cleopatra* never having yet appeared—sending up one of those creations in narrative form to the editor of a London magazine, with the author's compliments, and his hope that the story will be found acceptable to the editor's pages; suppose him, further, to have the temerity to ask for the candid remarks of the accomplished editor upon his manuscript. One can imagine the answer that young William would get for his mad supposition of such fitness from any one of the gentlemen who so correctly conduct that branch of the periodical Press.*

Were the objections of the scrupulous limited to a prurient

* It is, indeed, curious to consider what great works of the past the notions of the present day would aim to exclude from circulation, if not from publication, if they were issued as new fiction. In addition to those mentioned, think of the *King Œdipus* of Sophocles, the *Agamemnon* of Æschylus, Goethe's *Faust* and *Wilhelm Meister*, the *Prometheus* of Æschylus, Milton's *Paradise Lost*. The "unpleasant subjects" of the two first-named compositions, the "unsuitableness" of the next two, would be deemed equalled only by the profanity of the two last; for Milton, as it is hardly necessary to remind the reader, handles as his puppets the Christian divinities and fiends quite as freely as the Pagan divinities were handled by the Greek and Latin imaginative authors.

treatment of the relations of the sexes, or to any view of vice calculated to undermine the essential principles of social order, all honest lovers of literature would be in accord with them. All really true literature directly or indirectly sounds as its refrain the words in the *Agamemnon*: "Chant Ælinon, Ælinon! but may the good prevail." But the writer may print the *not* of his broken commandment in capitals of flame; it makes no difference. A question which should be wholly a question of treatment is confusedly regarded as a question of subject.

Why the ancient classic and old English tragedy can be regarded thus deeply, both by young people in their teens and by old people in their moralities, and the modern novel cannot be so regarded; why the honest and uncompromising delineation which makes the old stories and dramas lessons in life must make of the modern novel, following humbly on the same lines, a lesson in iniquity, is to some thinkers a mystery inadequately accounted for by the difference between old and new.

Whether minors should read unvarnished fiction based on the deeper passions, should listen to the eternal verities in the form of narrative, is somewhat a different question from whether the novel ought to be exclusively addressed to those minors. The first consideration is one which must be passed over here; but it will be conceded by most friends of literature that all fiction should not be shackled by conventions concerning budding womanhood, which may be altogether false. It behoves us then to inquire how best to circumvent the present lording of nonage over maturity, and permit the explicit novel to be more generally written.

That the existing magazine and book-lending system will admit of any great modification is scarcely likely. As far as the magazine is concerned it has long been obvious that as a vehicle for fiction dealing with human feeling on a comprehensive scale it is tottering to its fall; and it will probably in the course of time take up openly the position that it already covertly occupies, that of a purveyor of tales for the youth of both sexes, as it assumes that tales for those rather numerous members of society ought to be written.

There remain three courses by which the adult may find deliverance. The first would be a system of publication under which

books could be bought and not borrowed, when they would naturally resolve themselves into classes instead of being, as now, made to wear a common livery in style and subject, enforced by their supposed necessities in addressing indiscriminately a general audience.

But it is scarcely likely to be convenient to either authors or publishers that the periodical form of publication for the candid story should be entirely forbidden, and in retaining the old system thus far, yet ensuring that the emancipated serial novel should meet the eyes of those for whom it is intended, the plan of publication as a *feuilleton* in newspapers read mainly by adults might be more generally followed, as in France. In default of this, or co-existent with it, there might be adopted what, upon the whole, would perhaps find more favour than any with those who have artistic interests at heart, and that is, magazines for adults; exclusively for adults, if necessary. As an offshoot there might be at least one magazine for the middle-aged and old.

There is no foretelling; but this (since the magazine form of publication is so firmly rooted) is at least a promising remedy, if English prudery be really, as we hope, only a parental anxiety. There should be no mistaking the matter, no half measures. *La dignité de la pensée*, in the words of Pascal, might then grow to be recognised in the treatment of fiction as in other things, and untrammelled adult opinion on conduct and theology might be axiomatically assumed and dramatically appealed to. Nothing in such literature should for a moment exhibit lax views of that purity of life upon which the well-being of society depends; but the position of man and woman in nature, and the position of belief in the minds of man and woman—things which everybody is thinking but nobody is saying—might be taken up and treated frankly.

THOMAS HARDY.

HOW TO GET THE TITHES BILL THROUGH THE HOUSE OF COMMONS.

HOWEVER open to criticism the treatment of the Tithes Bill by the Government in the last Session of Parliament may be, one important result at least has followed from their action. The tithes question has been forced forward into a more prominent position, and nearer to that region of "practical politics" out of which alone legislation issues. Moreover, there appears to be at this moment a greater semblance of agreement among the various parties interested as to the lines on which legislation should proceed, than has up to this time manifested itself.

The reason of this state of affairs is to be found in the fact that only two points out of the whole mass of controversy which centres round the word "tithes" are now under public discussion. These are, the difficulty which now besets the present tithe-owners in certain localities in collecting the tithe; and the false position in which all parties concerned are placed, when that tithe has to be collected by a particularly unpopular process of law from persons by whom the debt is not really due.

Members of that chivalrous society which yearns to rescue the Church of England from the fetters which enthrall her, and from the lucre which throttles her, will naturally reserve to themselves the right to raise that branch of the tithes question which is comprised in disendowment, when they think the fitting opportunity has arrived; but, pending the time when tithes can be utilised to pay for elementary education, gas, water, or drains, and so diminish the burthen of rates and taxes, which oppresses themselves or their constituents, it is obviously their interest to keep the value of the property unimpaired. Now tithes which cannot be collected are

obviously a property of falling value. It is therefore equally the interest of those who desire that the tithe should continue to be devoted to its present purpose, and of those who wish to see it directed to other uses, to make the collection easy and certain. The fact that a distraint for tithe has now to be levied on the property of a man who does not really owe the debt has only to be stated to prevent any man from, publicly at least, objecting to the application of a remedy.

Of all the blunders made by the Government during the progress of the Tithes Bill in the House of Commons last Session, the one which it is hardest for its supporters to forgive is that by which they were induced to vote against Mr. Gray's instruction on this subject on the plea that, admirable as the reform proposed was, it could not possibly be introduced into that particular Bill. One class of politicians, and one class only, can consistently oppose legislation on these two points; consistently, that is to say, with their real frame of mind; for not even in this case can the opposition be consistent with the avowed motives of those who conduct it. I allude to those men who desire to maintain the tithes question as a running sore in the hope that the Church may by it be made so unpopular in Wales as to render her disestablishment and disendowment easy; who, in short, take up the tithes grievance for the sole object of using it as a lever against the Church.

It would be most unfair to include in this category the body of Welsh Gladstonian members in the House of Commons; they are clearly honest and sincere in their views concerning the Church. No one, who has the pleasure of knowing Mr. Thomas Ellis, to take an instance, can suppose him for a moment capable of obstructing and thwarting the redress of an acknowledged evil for the ulterior object of retaining that evil as a weapon against the Church. Men who have taken up so great a question as disestablishment and disendowment for the sake of a principle do not stoop to low stratagems for the advancement of their cause. The open opposition, therefore, to these reforms will not be of a formidable character; the secret and below-stairs opposition is that which is to be dreaded and in this conjuncture it will be useful to consider the true position at this moment of each of the parties interested in the tithe question.

The occupier of land who pays £100 a year to his landlord, and hands over a cheque for £10 to the parson, is commonly said to pay £100 in rent and £10 in tithe. As a matter of fact he does nothing of the sort. He pays £110 in rent to his landlord, who in his turn pays to the parson £10. But, as the landlord is a man of business habits, always on the look-out for contrivances to save time and labour, he has discovered that an economy in both departments is effected, if his tenant hands over to him only £100 out of his £110 of rent, and pays the other £10 for him to the parson. Is it the landlord, then, who pays the tithe? Not at all. If the word "pay" is used to imply a diminution of income, a taking away of something that has previously been his, the landowner does not pay the tithe. He does pay the Income-tax; he does not pay tithe. The money he pays over to the parson never has been his, any more than the neighbouring glebe, which was given to the Church out of the property he has inherited four hundred years ago; but his income is his own, and the tax on it is exacted with the avowed object of diminishing it by a certain amount for the benefit of the State. If the estate he owns is an inherited one, he has paid succession duty on so many hundred or thousand pounds less than he would have paid on had the rent of the estate not been charged with tithe. Or suppose that he has himself bought the property he owns; if the land had been tithe-free, the purchase money to him would have been so many hundred or thousand pounds more, according to the capitalised value of the tithe rent-charge.

In either case the present landowner has had cash value down for the liability to pay tithe; and, having received that value, it is no more honest of him to deduct one penny from what is due to the tithe-owner than it would be for him to try to retain for himself certain pictures out of a collection which has been bequeathed to the National Gallery by the man from whom he has inherited his property, and on which, therefore, he has not paid succession duty.

When an occupier of land demands a reduction on his tithe, either he is in financial difficulties owing to hard times, or he is not. If he is in no difficulties, it is not easy to distinguish his

demand from an attempt at petty larceny. If he is in difficulties, he is demanding the reduction from altogether the wrong person. Either the landlord has not reduced his rent at all or he has not reduced it enough. In no case, where a penny of rent is paid to the landowner, ought any demand for a reduction of tithe to be made to the tithe-owner. It is not his own pocket that the occupier is relieving, but his landlord's. He is obtaining the necessary reduction at the expense of the wrong party.

English and Welsh landlords have suffered very greatly during this period of agricultural depression, and have borne their sufferings manfully. Nevertheless, the squire is still, in ninety-nine cases out of a hundred, a much richer man than the parson. How mean, how unworthy of their class, then, is the conduct of those landowners who acquiesce in pressure being brought by their tenants on the tithe-owner in the hope that a reduction on the tithe will render unnecessary a further reduction on the rent; or who endeavour to mitigate their own farming losses by withholding from the tithe-owner property which is his and his only. The action of these men seems to me more immoral than that of the average thief. He at least may have ignorance or grinding poverty to plead; the landlord can plead neither. If distinctions can be drawn between kinds of theft, it seems to me that the advantage is all on the side of the labourer who poaches a landowner's pheasant, and against that same landowner when he tries to bully his clergyman into granting him a reduction on the tithe.

But, it is urged, the settlement of 1836, as tested by the agricultural depression of the last ten years, has been proved to be so unfairly in favour of the tithe-owner that the landowner is morally justified in objecting to the payment of the tithe in full. Surely it is time that this fallacy was exploded. If there was any unfairness in the settlement of 1836, that unfairness was entirely to the advantage of the landlord. The facts with which Parliament then had to deal were simple. The tithe-owner was entitled to a tenth of the gross produce of the land. This he sometimes received in kind, but more generally he made a composition with the farmers of the parish. When he was able to collect his tithes in kind he almost always made much more out of them than the amount of the

composition the farmers were willing to agree to. There was abundant evidence to prove this given before the Select Committee on Agriculture in 1833. In his evidence, Mr. Peyton (7334-7340) sums up with these words: "I believe I am justified in saying that in some instances the clergymen do not get more than half of what they ought, but certainly short by 35 or 40 per cent., except in some instances." Yet it was on the rate of these compositions, after a prior deduction of about 25 per cent. off the gross value of the tithe for the inevitable cost of converting the produce into money, that the final commutations were chiefly based.

"Hence it follows," to quote the words of the Rev. C. A Stevens, M.A., in his pamphlet, *Land Rental, Tithes, and Tithe Rent-charge*, "that whereas 60 per cent. in the value of the whole tithe was reserved to the whole body of tithe-owners, and whereas the lay tithe-owners had received an amount not much short of the full 75 [per cent.] money value," because they had collected their tithe in kind more generally than the clerical owners, "an amount considerably short of the 60 per cent. must have been received by the clerical tithe-owner, and formed his subsequent tithe rent-charge; and that, of the 15 per cent. alienated *in perpetuum* to the landowner, by far the larger proportion must have come out of the pockets of the parochial clergy."

To sum up the *immediate* results of the Act of 1836, the clergyman in no case received more than 60 per cent. of the whole value of the tithe, in very many cases not more than 50 per cent. The landowner, on the contrary, in so far as he had to deal with the Church, received whatever difference there was between the cost of collection of the tithe to the farmer and the 25 per cent. which it was found to cost the tithe-owner, and the whole of the remaining percentage, varying from another 15 to 25, which was for ever alienated from the clerical tithe-owner. Let Sir James Caird speak as to the further results, which have followed since 1836:—

"But up to the commutation the income of the Church increased with the increased value yielded by the land, the original object that the Church should progress in equal proportion with the land being thus maintained. From 1836 the tithe-rent was stopped. Since that time the land-rental of

England has risen 50 per cent., and all that portion of the increase which, previously to 1836, would have gone to the Church has gone to the landowners."*

And, again, in his evidence before the Select Committee on Tithe Rent-charge in 1881, of which Mr. Inderwick was chairman:

"[Question 188.] Do you adhere to what you said, that if the old right of participation had continued with regard to tithe the annual income of the Church would now have been £2,000,000 greater than it is, and the whole of the difference has gone into the pockets of the landowners?—So far as I know; I do not know where else the difference can have gone."

Facts such as these require no comment.

Before passing away from the position of the landowner and tenant, I should like to say a word as to the "conscience" argument: "Welsh farmers or landowners, who are Nonconformists, conscientiously object to contribute to the support of an alien Church." It is not necessary here to discuss the accuracy of the word "alien," but only the use of the word "conscientiously." The applicability of "conscientiously" depends on the word "contribute," which Dr. Johnson defines as "to give to some common stock." But no one can "give" (*i.e.*, make a gift of) that which has never been his property. The tithe has never been the property of the farmer or the landlord in question. He therefore cannot, and does not, "give" it to the common stock of the Church. His conscience may be at rest. I do not deny that many small Welsh farmers, who are quite ignorant of the real nature of the tithe, may have genuinely persuaded themselves that the non-payment of tithe is with them a matter of conscience; but I do maintain that it is quite impossible for educated men, such as members of Parliament, journalists, or Nonconformist ministers, honestly to advance this argument.

Let us now consider the position of the tithe-owner, who may be divided into three classes, lay, corporate, and clerical. The lay tithe-owner seems to me as much entitled to his tithe in full as the fund-holder. To him they are simply an investment, which he has either bought in the open market or inherited. The corporate tithe-

* *The Landed Interest.* 1878. Chapter x., p. 131.

owner is of two kinds: the one, such as a cathedral chapter or the Ecclesiastical Commissioners, is naturally looked on by the opponents of the Church in precisely the same light as the clerical or third class of owners; the other consists of colleges, such as Christ Church, Oxford.

If the movement in Wales has no other ulterior object than the getting rid of the payment of tithe altogether, the opposition to the payment of the tithes due to Christ Church is amazing. Here are tithes devoted to one of those pet objects to which all tithes will be devoted in the golden age of the Liberation Society—public education. Christ Church is open to all the world; there are no tests; the only road to its studentships is merit; these studentships have helped to educate great men, among them Mr. Gladstone. Mr. Conybeare, also, but for the punctual payment of Welsh tithes, might, perhaps, not have enjoyed at Christ Church the reward of merit. And yet the payment of these tithes has been as strenuously resisted as those which go to support "an alien Church." Truly the problem is a complicated one; the only solution which fits all cases is that the movement is really one for the enhancement of the value of the property of Welsh landlords. Yet I scarcely suspect the Welsh Gladstonian members to be guilty of such disinterested and wholly unnecessary philanthropy. Or is it that the ignorance of Welsh farmers is being used as an instrument to effect that which does not really lie nearest to their hearts—the disestablishment and disendowment of the Welsh Church? Would the Welsh farmer be quite such a ready instrument for this purpose if he knew that, whatever the outcome of the movement, he would never pay a penny less per annum than the sum total of his tithe, rent, rates, and taxes now amounts to?

What the position is of many of the Welsh clergy—who are dependent for their income on the punctual payment of tithe—the Bishop of St. Asaph has told us. To many of them it is a question of starvation. "What a scandal to Churchmen, and what a disgrace to the system of the Church of England!" exclaimed Mr. Henry Fowler, in the House of Commons. Surely this sneer was not quite worthy of so fair and honourable an opponent as the member for Wolverhampton. Why should Churchmen raise a subscription, not

for the benefit of the clergy of their own Church, who could not possibly expect to receive from such a fund more than the income which is their just due, but for the profit and advantage of certain Nonconformists, who, perhaps through ignorance, perhaps from dishonest motives, have retained in their own pockets that which is the property of their neighbour? No! A relief fund should not be started except in an extreme emergency; but to a fund to support the clergy in the legal proceedings necessary to recover their property there can be no objection of this sort. It is to be hoped that the leaders of the Church have considered this question in all its bearings. I wonder whether Mr. Fowler would approve of this act of mutual help so entirely in the spirit of his implied advice! Or should we have some of the choice phrases about "unwarrantable outside interference" imported from the Ponsonby estate, in County Cork, for use in England and in Wales?

It is not easy for Churchmen, who are not behind the Parliamentary scenes in the lobbies of the House of Commons, to understand the real cause of the failure of the Tithes Bill of last Session. There was not pressure enough behind the Bill. A Session of Parliament is shaped like a bottle. Scores of Government measures are introduced in the first three quarters of its length, and in its last quarter, a very narrow neck, they all get jammed together, and only those which have most pressure behind them finally emerge, ragged and mangled.

"Pressure," says the bewildered clergyman, "what pressure can be so powerful as the friendship of the Government? And is not this Government friendly to the Church?"

I should be indeed loth to think that this Government was anything but anxious to befriend the Church in respect of any measure in itself just and wise; but it must be clear to the Government that, after the extraordinary bungling of last Session, they must be on their mettle this year to prove that when they make pledges they intend to redeem them, and that their friendship for the Church is not mere electioneering ground bait.

So much for the future. For the past, critics must remember that Ministers are only human, and that in Parliamentary tactics

there is only one policy which succeeds, that of the importunate widow. Churchmen, lay and clerical, must put all the pressure they possibly can on their members of Parliament. They must worry them by resolutions, correspondence, and meetings, till each member feels that an all-important body of his constituents will be *discontented with him personally* if a Tithes Bill be not passed. The rest will take care of itself. The members of Parliament will concentrate their worrying on the Government; the necessary pressure will have been exerted, and the Bill will be carried through all its stages.

It has lately been the fashion to declare that the Church of England may be discounted in political calculations, and that it has no political influence. Never was there a greater mistake. The influence is there; it has never in recent times been stronger than now; it has not been felt only because it has not been used. It has not been used, because the Church has not been seriously attacked, and except in self-defence she has nothing to do with the ordinary quarrels of political parties. No worse fate could befall her than to become a political church, for a political church cannot be a spiritual church. Witness the loss of spiritual power of those nonconforming bodies who have placed their politics almost on a level with their religion. Few religious bodies, probably, have ever at any time possessed more genuine spiritual power than Welsh Methodism in its early years. Who can measure the distance of the fall, as shown by the leading articles of such papers as the *Baner*, edited as some of them are by ministers of that very Church?

Far better, then, is it for the Church of England to run the risk of being supposed to have no political influence than to incur the danger of becoming a political church. In this, however, as in most cases, there is a *via media*, and it is the duty of those to whom the Church looks for guidance, the Bishops, to lead her along it. It is time she recognised that she must attend to her own affairs in the House of Commons by pointing out to its individual members what legislation is necessary for the health of her organic life. Unless she does this, her needs will be pressed aside in favour, not only of excellent reforms and social movements

energetically organised, but also of the various fads which are ceaselessly puffing themselves. One vile practice, however, the Church of England must never flirt with. She must never make her support a matter of barter. The policy of "Perish the Empire so long as no one vivisects this rat" is a standing danger to the State. In Utopia, societies and associations whose members are ready to give their votes to any candidate who will support their particular fad, no matter what his views on other questions may be, will certainly be suppressed. Meanwhile, the attitude of the Church should be a standing protest against this practice.

Again, it is the Bishops who must lead. The tithe question is a test of whether they are willing to take that responsibility of action towards Parliament, where the welfare of the Church is concerned, which will become more and more necessary. Either the present state of the tithe question is a serious danger to the welfare of the Church or it is not. If it is not, let us know it from those who are responsible, and cease to worry Ministers and Parliament with Tithes Bills. If it is, then let the Bishops lead the way in making all concerned understand the true state of the case. A bold lead will draw after it the necessary support from the clergy and laity, a support which will gather sufficient momentum as the movement proceeds, to secure the passage of a Bill through the House of Commons.

WOLMER.

RAMBLES WITH CUPID AND PSYCHE.

HOWEVER sober he may be, and however desirous of maintaining a tone of scientific severity, the essayist who devotes himself to the progress of sensibility and the evolution of virtue should not neglect the one everlasting theme of poesy and romance. If he goes back far enough, and looks a little into its history and antiquities, he may find in it some pregnant suggestions.

Not that the first song was a love song, but a song of fighting: fighting which in one shape or another is the existence of everything in the known universe and the one thing that can never cease. The original man, we may suppose, was ready enough to celebrate his prowess as soon as he had found the wherewithal. The loves of the original man were a private matter. In his view, as we say in different times, they were by no means to be given to the general ear or voluntarily surrendered to public observation. It was a much later minstrel who adopted the love-strain as a regular branch of business; and thenceforth for many a generation all verse was employed in celebrating the griefs and joys of love and war. That was the sole business of the bard, who for many a hundred year had little or nothing to say about azure skies and purling streams, and took no particular notice "when shaws bin green and shraddes full fair and leaves both large and long." And though it seems highly probable that in every race and tribe he sang of war (and with the genuine afflatus too) while yet it was void of all that we call heroic, we may be sure that the passion of passions had become exalted and purified in no small measure before Poesy took it in hand.

Yet that the minstrels and ballad-mongers did very much to exalt and purify it more is, no doubt, a just belief. Sometimes it

would seem that the poet gives himself credit for a more tremendous influence than he is entitled to boast of, but he is certainly entitled to *that* credit; as well as for having contributed vastly to lift all womankind into a nobler place in the world. What we understand by chivalry seems to have been very much of a dream, and its famous days an age corresponding to that brief time of youth for so many of us when our minds are filled with a romantic dawn—all light, all purity and honour—that yet dies out before matins and is half scorned at noon. Chivalry and its sentiment did little of a lasting kind for men; much more it did for women, and the minstrels were its chief priests. Whether they knew precisely what they were about is questionable, for poets were not so conscious of a mission then; but since in those remote days there must have been many females of hard and rebellious temper, who understood no more than their later-born sisters why they should be the mere toys of Man, we may fancy that the troubadours were sometimes listened to with feelings more various than they in their male ignorance were aware of. No doubt to give probability to that supposition we must assume the existence in woman's intellect of a kind of perception which men are inclined to think peculiarly their own. But what then? It is not a masculine faculty absolute; and we fancy the little court assembled in the dim baronial hall or on the sloping terraces without, the troubadour miauing his love-lays, and, while most of the ladies are merely melted at them, some still-featured beauty spurns at the softness of her sisters and the minstrel too, and views with prophetic eye a future conquest of the rights of women in the usual way—the mollification of the passions of man.

But if this dame were a philosopher she might have drawn yet more promise from something else, supposing that it had already come into existence, as in the time of the troubadours perhaps it had. The sensibilities of young children to the finer sympathies and purer emotions of love (and none but these, of course) must have been a comfort to her as foretelling loftier relations between the sexes; and all the more comforting, it may have been, because this same sensibility is strongest and most common among boys. So it seems to be, at any rate; and we might expect to find it so upon investigation. But so secret is the

whole race of women in these matters that there is no knowing the truth about them. Whatever men may know of women in general they do not learn from independent observation. Their own faculties may be good enough for metaphysics, but they are of little use in this inquiry; which, after years of application, would end in far less assurance of knowledge than when it began but for the occasional revelations, the rare confidences, of some particular woman. If for an instant one of the priestesses will now and then lift the veil for us, we learn something; if not, we carry ignorance in our beards to the grave. The flash of a laughing word (railing ones are not to be trusted), a sober, low-spoken confidence which no enticing can prolong beyond three sentences, and some particular woman will show us how dark our minds are on this subject by a sudden brilliancy of illumination, generally surprising. But all the while she feels that she is guilty of treachery; and the more womanly a woman is, the more the likelihood that she will "tell" diminishes to the point of disappearance. Of this or that individual of her own sex she may have plenty to say, and she is none the less inclined to a candid expression of opinion from time to time if she is much in love with husband, son, or brother. Nor is this all. If you are not downright ill-natured or unjust, or if your criticisms never extend by any stretch of implication beyond the individual to the sex, she will often listen without displeasure to any pretty piece of ridicule that you may whisper against a female friend. But a bantering word against the sex and she is instantly in arms; and the more loyal she is, the less likely is she to be surprised into any revealing word of her own. Even the loose and wicked ones acknowledge that point of honour, which is also, of course, a matter of self-protection. But here and there may be found a person in petticoats who, not being a womanly woman, but something which she thinks far better, will take a man aside to prove her masculine superiority of mind by showing him the fountains of her sex's foibles with thoughtful candour. She, however, is a rarity. Take all known persons in petticoats, and she reckons as one in five millions or thereabouts; and, were all the rest aware of her treacheries, by all the rest would she be abhorred. Neither is she loved by the man with

whom she is so extremely confidential. Indeed, so strange a thing is human nature that, in his revolt at what he also calls treachery, he is as likely as not to scorn the evidence by which his misogyny is justified.

But what was it that we digressed from? Or, before asking the question, shall we go a little farther, and remark upon the significant difference between the sexes that comes into view at this point? For surely it is significant that while the general disposition of women is such that they are willing to rend in pieces the character of individual women, and yet cannot endure disparagement of the sex as a whole, with men it is quite otherwise in both particulars. In their gossip amongst themselves—after-dinner gossip for example—they will cheerfully agree that there is no good in men that is good to the foundation, and that not one of us is what he makes believe to be. But should any of the company begin to take to pieces the character of an absent friend he will soon be aware of a silence more killing than his speech. The difference—which, of course, is not without exceptions in either sex—is a meaning one; and its natural history, the why and wherefore of it, would make a very pretty and instructive page in the hands of the playfully profound inquirer.

We will leave it to him, and go back to our point of digression, which we may be all the more willing to do because this difference between the sexes, curious as it is, is less curious than the sensibility of children to the grand passion. The one may be accounted for by the relations that have existed between men and women, and the relations of both with the world without, from the very beginnings of humanity; the other is less explicable, though it must rank among the emotions and sensibilities of later growth, and therefore should be equally capable of comprehension. This, too, is a product of the Northern races; and how it should come into existence at all is to me mysterious. A flower rooted and blooming in the air could hardly be more strange than the love which many a little man of ten years old shyly cherishes for some little maid. It is no mere affection of friendship, no such romantic attachment as that which bound Celia and Rosalind to each other, or such as couples the brace of lads who go apart on all possible

occasions to read together, stroll together, fish together, dwell together in a maze of aspirations and confidences—like those that united Irving and Carlyle in their boyhood, when they wandered about the hills together in a cloud of dreams. The sentiment of which I speak is the true passion of riper years in all that the poets ever make of its intensity, its absorption, its fancy-kindling romance. To make all complete, there is the same sheepish sense of shame in the boy of twelve as in the young man of twenty; and I daresay it proceeds from the same source—suspicion of softness and a dread of being thought unmanly. There is the same resort to solitude and the enjoyment of it; the same withdrawal from all that is rude and coarse; the same doting upon flowers and stars and the lovelier things of earth, the same preference for melancholy twilight, the same restless dreaming, and even the making of verses. And all for some little maid in short frocks, who is none the worse, perhaps, if she does not know, and could not be made to understand, what it is all about.

Not that it does the boy any harm. With all its little fervours and distresses—including the most desperate jealousy sometimes—his is but a fleeting passion. All's over in a few months; but the efflorescence was as natural and as spontaneous as that of the daisies in a field; it was quite as innocent, and had even less of earth at the roots as far as eye can tell. The girl of his heart, while her beauty beamed above the horizon on that tender organ, shed upon it a light and a warmth like that of the first day's sunshine on a darkly-teeming world. Every growth was good; and though Master Tom may go back to cricket after awhile, very much ashamed of himself, he has passed through a wholesome course of culture and has supplied another curious study to the thoughtful. The more thoughtful among his uncles, by which I mean the more solid ones, would pronounce him a fool if they were in his confidence. Not so his aunts; partly because they are women, partly because women do not share to the full our strange, unhappy forgetfulness of what we were in childhood. But, male or female, not one of them, perhaps, would ever think of the boy as a Presage, and yet that he may be. These little love-affairs of his, with all the poetry, all the nobility, all the exaltation of the true

passion in them, and none of the unconscious grossness which the cynic and the man of science will bid him suspect by-and-bye—these little affairs, maybe, are prophetic of yet more lofty relations between the sexes, as the "mind-matter" of a later philosophy becomes purified in us by evolutionary processes. "Gallantry" lost its meritorious character about the time when hell became incredible; and though in many minds a wild, unmanageable admiration of it continues—just as the old barbaric roots of heathenism threw up their leafy rods in us long after the Cross was raised in every parish—yet this we may observe: the boaster of ladies' favours is all but unknown nowadays, and known only as a survival of brutishness. And it is not more unreasonable than it is unrighteous to look for a constant if slow diminution of brutalism in all its workings. We should beware of far-fetched fancies; but the passionate complete child-love of which we have spoken may be a sign of advance from the original impulses of sheer instinct, with their purely "physiological basis." Or, if it pleases you better, we may call it a sign of elemental change in the physiological basis itself, where nerve and brain are highly cultivated; with the result of extending and more deeply rooting those refinements which are the salvation of many a lad, and the making of him as a man.

It is reported that when (but this is years ago) a certain statesman of habitually solemn mien began a speech with "Sugar——" the House of Commons laughed. Thereupon the great man, sharply nettled, thundered in awful tones, "Sugar! I say, Sugar!" Instant silence; and then said he, as with eyes severe he swept the hushed assembly, "Who laughs at sugar now?" Had I the famous Minister's magic, I should cast it round the word "Calf-love," which now comes into this rambling discourse. Calf-love: an excellent and fortunate thing and yet something to laugh at; to the general view a foolish growth of disordered sentimentalities, much preyed upon by small wits. But even the small wits have passed through the calf-love period, most of them, and have some tenderness for the pretty weaknesses which yet they would be ashamed to acknowledge. The good paterfamilias himself—anxious as he may be to see his boys grow up in modest manliness, proud as he would be to know that their hearts are the secret harbourage of

high thoughts and purifying fancies—is distressed, mortified, impatient, when the brooding hang-dog signs of calf-love appear in them; and though the mother of the boys has a better understanding of the case, she is not much happier. She is impatient, too—for different reasons. Sad to say, unless the Beloved Object is known to her she suspects hussy at once, sketches for her own torment fancy-pictures of budding artfulness in a lightsome thing with angel eyes and fascinating gowns, and wonders what will become of her frank, untutored child at this rate. But deeper than all is the sudden consciousness that her young son is already lost to her, and has made himself over, body and bones, soul and sense, to Another Woman. Hateful to her, therefore, is every sign of the "infatuation" that marks the transfer. The flush upon his face when he finds at breakfast one little letter more dainty than the rest—in the rebellious heart of her she thinks it makes her boy look more like a fool than she could possibly have imagined him; and if he happens to be her first-born, and if, being comparatively young, she happens to be very jealous, she feels a momentary tigress-wish to tear the mincing epistle from beneath his waistcoat and read it to him in the dry light of a woman's knowledge and a mother's wisdom. His verses to his mistress may be Shakespearean; to her they would be pain. At the sight of ink at the end of his fingers her spirit faints; and, with all those cherished old letters of her own locked away, she reads from them the (oh, dear me!) terribly foolish epistle, six pages long, which her son has certainly been composing. What though the writer of the originals that furnish forth her fancies is none the worse for their authorship (hark! with how sound a conscience the good man snores!), that makes no difference to her as, in the dead of night, the young man's love-letter is invented in her mind and read off in his still boyish hand.

All most human, all most womanly, no jot of it the worse for being illogical, but yet all wrong. No, not all wrong, but unreasonable; and there are many unreasonable things that are nearly all right. What more unreasonable than the domestic fowl which, when the terrier dashes at her brood, flings up her feathers, puts beak to ground, and attacks the marauder? And even if she gets killed, that's all right. The other mother of whom we have been

speaking could never have been so good a one from the beginning, nor (if love and tenderness be hereditary) so fruitful a branch of humanity for humanity to grow from, were she not a prey to those unreasonable anxieties about her boy. Unreasonable they are, however, even though the young gentleman be known to her as not very wise. The fool will be foolish in all things, and the weak weak. The foolish young man will seem more foolish still when overtaken by first-love; but if folly is in the nature of him it is just as likely to come out when he falls in love at forty for the very last time. And even the foolish young man will be none the worse for mere headlong precipitation. He will be none the worse in his wits or in his morals; neither will his perceptions of what is highest, purest, and most beautiful in the world be narrowed. They will be widened rather. He will feel where nothing touched his senses, linger with excess of fondness (for that matter) upon all that is sweet and fair, and start with horror from alluring evil.

Were calf-love a purchasable commodity, every wise father and mother would go to market for six months of it at least, and present it to their sons on their nineteenth birthday. There should be a good fairy to sell it in the vicinity of every country town. The old people would drive in, as occasion demanded, from all the surrounding neighbourhood, in gigs, in market-carts, in carriages with one horse and carriages with two. A little temple in a maze, and the maze in a garden, and the garden in a grove, and the grove in a high place near the town. A private way for the nobility and gentry, if required. In the temple sits the good fairy in the guise of a little old woman, very beautiful; business hours from the setting of the sun to the rising of the moon. As they enter she looks upon each parental pair with the eyes of divination, which tell her what manner of young man it is that they are solicitous about Then to this couple she gives a rose, to another a kerchief, each so charmed as to protect the recipient (who will find the article on his pillow to-morrow morning) from the very artful and the exceeding wicked, and the thing is done. We all know what command the scent of a flower or the lilt of a song may have over the secret recesses of the memory: something of the same sort happens here. At the first whiff from the rose, at the first touch of the glove,

a dozen invisible little keys get to work in the young man's interior, throwing open as many avenues of perception and sensibility. Till to-day they have been closed; now they will be thronged with a fresh birth of thoughts, dreams, emotions, aspirations, as soon as some fair young stranger's face comes into view. At the gate of each avenue where they swarm an angel stands to forbid entrance to everything ignoble.

A pretty arrangement; it would be very well so. But we can fancy what prayers the good fairy would hear from father and mother to keep their sons from dotage absolute; which, indeed, is most trying to friendly observers. It is not that the raptures of young love are so ridiculous in themselves, but that they should spring from such an object of worship as Miss Smith. Were it the wonders of the universe that drove the lad into these silent musings, drawing him away to heights of rapturous solitude where his nearest relations become distant and prying, or if the working of some absorbing importunate genius like Shelley's accounted for his room-pacings at night and his wretched breakfasts in the morning, it would be well enough. But Laura Smith, who can eat buns with any young woman in the neighbourhood! That is the annoyance and humiliation of the family—mere extravagant dotage on Miss Smith. The rest is tolerable enough; more, it is known by all sensible fathers and mothers to be fruitful of good, and the best of all safeguards against the assault of corrupting evil.

It is strange; and we are at liberty to wonder how much Miss Smith has to do with it after all. Certain it is that, if there were no such person to dawn upon the young man's affections at nineteen or thereabouts, that fine phase in his life which we know as the period of calf-love would never have a beginning. But the wakening of the poet is not exactly the creation of him; and the young lover's moods of inspiration, in which he who was all prose yesterday, and will be prose again to-morrow, looks out upon the world with the poet's eyes, carry him far beyond the emotions of creature love. If these inspired moods of his proceed from them, they have little to do with them. Though they do not exist apart from such emotions, they are above them—lifting the lover into

regions of perception and feeling which are the poet's heritage, and where, if you are sufficiently gifted, you may wander with profit and delight for years without being in love at all. It will not do to answer and say, "Yes, but 'tis she that glorifies everything"; for if that be so, how comes it that it is necessary and essential, as it certainly seems to be, that she herself should be glorified first and far above all? Without that the magic would never begin to work; and the strange thing is that the magic has to be bestowed on the magician by him who wonders and trembles at the spell.

"The sun rises and all the beauty of the landscape is revealed." This is what might be said of Miss Smith (who stands for the sun in this figure of speech), and whatever capabilities of beauty and fruitfulness may exist in the boy-lover's mind, but for a very great difference; a difference which will not be denied by anyone acquainted with this charmingly mysterious subject. In this case the natural order of things is reversed. No sooner does the sun peep above the horizon than the landscape sheds upon the rising orb all the radiance and the potency which field and tree rejoice in; and these glories being then reflected to the earth they sprang from, the landscape forthwith acknowledges them as something of distant and divine origin! But that is not at all in the regular order of things. Cause and effect mingle here in extravagant confusion, and there is no easy way of disentangling them. It would really seem as if "the dayspring of love" were a spontaneous awakening of sentiment and faculty, to which Miss Smith contributes little more than the accident of a sufficiently quickening presence. That is the true explanation, perhaps, and it is favoured by the curious phenomenon of child-love, which is an earlier awakening of precisely the same kind; and yet no man who has gone through the experience and well remembers the romance can quite believe that it is so. In some minds, indeed, the romance never ceases, and long after the glorious illusions that attended it have died away the one divine and only She remains undiscovered for anything else. Yet this seems certain: no such witcheries as the boy-lover knows ever proceed afterwards from a love which is thought more perfect—love in marriage. This is the most complete

happiness in the world, with health thereto and temper sweet; but the man who is well blessed with it would learn with equanimity that the moon he used to gaze upon so rapturously from his window o' nights is really made of green cheese, and negligently take the information of science as to the absolutely mechanical origin of all that is lovely in the universe, and his own rhapsodies about them into the bargain.

It appears, then, that even though we conclude that calf-love is only a fever, a ferment of the blood working in the brain, we should be thankful for its infliction on every lad of our acquaintance. For as long as it lasts, at any rate, it fills the boy's mind with a portion of the light of genius; and he must be a dull dog to begin with if some rays of it do not linger in him—enough to read by where otherwise all would be dark—to the last days of his life. But we have here to do with more than the quickening of fancy, the kindling of imaginative mind. It is that, but that is not all or even the best of it. The best of it is an illumination which, for short, we will call moral, and then leave it to be explained by whosoever can account for its spontaneous generation at the mere sight of one who may not have a spark of fancy or morality to communicate. Indeed, it very often happens that she has not, but only as much as will serve her own purposes and save her from reproach. But as for that matter, it is neither here nor there. The lady's wits have nothing to do with it, nor any manner of indwelling excellence. She has only to be in sight. Here in the young man's abode is a wilderness of books; there, without, the whole visible universe with all its beauties and wonders; but no inspiration has ever proceeded from the one, the other was scarcely seen, till a wandering glance alighted on some young woman in a distant pew at church! No Miss Smith, no such awakenings ever! When did this sort of thing begin? At what point in the progress of sensibility and the evolution of morals did this mystery come in? Not when men were still forest-creatures, we may be sure. And so perhaps, as we get farther from that condition, there may be more to come, or, when it comes, it may oftener come to stay. If so, this will be a better world by-and-bye, and for women even more than for men.

TRADES UNIONISM FOR WOMEN.

I HAVE heard that a lady once pestered the great Rothschild with inquiries as to the best means of making money, till, driven by her pertinacity into giving a direct answer, he impatiently exclaimed, "Matches, madam, matches are as good as anything—provided you have got enough of them!" Just so. The first requisite for the making of strong labour organisations, as for the making of great wealth, is to have abundance of material in your own hands. It is of no use to be prepared with all the machinery for organisation if no one will come to be organised. Yet this is the disheartening condition under which, until lately, I and others associated with me in the work of spreading Union principles amongst working women have been for many years carrying on our obscure and humble labours. We were united, as far back as 1874, by Mrs. Paterson, in a league now called the Women's Trades Union and Provident League, which has its office—where anyone may apply for help—at the Industrial Hall, Broad Street, Bloomsbury; and we have gone on ever since, distributing leaflets, handbills, pamphlets, by the thousand, in the many crowded centres of women's industry; yet, when we fondly hoped that the ground was thoroughly prepared, we have called meetings only to find ourselves face to face with so scant an audience that the platform had to be abandoned by the speakers, and the meeting, prepared with so much zeal, lapsed, of necessity, into a chat with the four or five anxious women who alone had ventured to respond to our invitations. Indeed we very soon came to regard such an experience as rather encouraging; for our four or five women, well indoctrinated, would come back to us at a later day, bringing as many more with them, and gradually the numbers would increase until, created by the

efforts of the little band which had met us that first evening, there would arise a genuine trade society, soundly established, thoroughly independent, and self-governed, though numbering perhaps only a hundred or so. The nights we learnt to dread were our apparently successful nights, when, in reply to our call, we found a room packed with idlers, come out of curiosity, frightening away those we wanted to meet, and as certain to withhold all help as they were ready to give us their amused approval. Every now and again we were, however, cheered by some signs—such as were to be found in the strike of the Dewsbury weavers, so ably and successfully organised by Mrs. Ellis, herself a weaver—which showed that a few women, at any-rate, were thoroughly capable of understanding and applying the principles of trade organisation. Such occurrences were, alas! but few and far between. Nor did we, during those many years of which I speak, receive from the men's unions either countenance or support; rather was there a great unwillingness on their part to recognise the position of women in the trades, and to realise the fact that this position was likely to become a disturbing influence to their own industry precisely because of that neglect. They, as a body, neglected a plain duty towards their women-folk, and—as ever when duty is neglected—their neglect has recoiled on themselves, in too many instances taking a terrible vengeance.

In the Colonies—at least in Victoria—men were somewhat quicker than here to wake up to a sense of their responsibilities in this matter. The women of Melbourne, as late as 1882, were, indeed, no better off than their sisters in the Old World. The immense number of girls and women who found work in the factories, which rapidly arose after the law protecting native industries was passed, remained absolutely at the mercy of their employers, although their husbands and brothers had for thirty years previous enjoyed all the benefits of union. The natural consequence ensued. Steadily and surely the wages of the women were reduced to starvation point. At last they rebelled; a strike took place and the women appealed in their helplessness to the council of the men's Trades Hall. They did not appeal in vain. Their cause was vigorously advocated in the columns of the *Melbourne Age* by Mr. Julian Thomas, and the men's trade societies, together with the public, supported the

women until satisfactory rates of pay for their labour were agreed to by the masters. Since the women of Melbourne won the day in 1882 they have remembered the means by which it was won. They did not rush together blindly to go on strike and then slink away as soon as the immediate object was obtained. Their English sisters may take a lesson from them, for they have kept up the organisation which served them in the day of trouble, and they are now actually represented on the council of the Trades Hall. They even possess their own hall, built by the trustees, at a cost of over £1,800, and known as the Female Operatives' Hall. These results could not, however, have been attained by the women unaided and unorganised. The successful termination of their struggle with the masters in the first instance, and the firm establishment of their unions on sound practical lines, could not have been achieved without the help and experience of the men.

Even in England there were, now and again, remarkable exceptions to the general indifference. Individual societies would sometimes come forward and give valuable help. The saddlers last year, for example, made friendly offers when the committee of the Women's Trades Union Provident League endeavoured, by means of their secretary, to induce the women employed in that trade to combine; and some years ago, when an effort was made through me to unite the tailoresses in Oxford, I received the most friendly assistance from the representatives of the Amalgamated Tailors in that town. The secretary and treasurer of the Oxford branch actually gave up their dinner-hour on several successive days in order to meet the girls as they left the factory, distributing our leaflets and doing their best to persuade them to come in. On the whole, however, the attitude of the more active and leading Trades Unionists has hitherto been, if not actually hostile, anything but friendly.

Now, I am not opposed on principle, as many of my friends are, to all State interference with freedom of private contract, and it has always seemed to me that to sit quietly watching the operation of the laws of social and political economy in an attitude of respectful fatalism is an absolutely untenable position on the part of a convinced Trades Unionist. I am perfectly ready to accept State aid whenever it can do something for me which I can't do for my-

self; but I am unwilling to appeal to State legislation except as a last resource. To illustrate the position I will take a very extreme case, that of the women employed in the nail and chain making trades of South Staffordshire and East Worcestershire. Their case was partly complicated by the introduction of machinery into branches of these trades previously dependent on hand labour, and as wages fell the attempt was naturally made by the suffering families to eke out the pittance earned by the husband and father with the labour of the wife and children. This has gone on until a point has been reached at which severe and regular labour carried on, week in, week out, under the most deplorable physical conditions means, in the vast majority of cases, life at starvation point. Now the proposal made, as a remedy for these hideous evils, by Trades Union leaders, only so far back as 1883, was that the employment of girls under fourteen should be prohibited in the trade. Not for one moment would I wish to impugn the motives which prompted the conception of this measure. Supposing even that the men believed that by preventing their wives and daughters from working they would send up their own wages to a point which would enable them to maintain their families in decency at home, I for one should not be prepared to blame their object! Who does not admire the pictures sometimes drawn of an ideal state of society in which all the rough work of the world is performed by the valiant and strong men of the family, whilst the women remain within doors making home beautiful and holy, receiving all the rough-hewn experience of their men folk and transforming it by the wisdom of their sympathy and the tenderness of their love? Will any of us be found to say that our place as women, in a home such as this, would not be more blessed than the market-place?

I have been to Cradley Heath; I have seen there the women and girls at the forge, and I do not hesitate to say that the state of those who are not working in the great factories, but who are "sweated" in the workshops of the small employers, is a disgrace to the country we all love so well. It rivals that of the sack-makers of Dundee, or of the tailoresses of the East End. To enter into details as to the conditions of their labour and its general bearings on their health would be beyond the possibilities of this

short paper; but I have it on the direct authority of a gentleman, himself a large employer in the trade, that the wages which I found to be paid in the sweating shops, of 2s. 6d. to 4s. per week, for something like sixty-five hours of skilled labour, are "not justified by the state of trade, and that someone must be making a monstrous profit at their expense." The remedy for this state of things lies, in my opinion, and in the opinion of those with whom I work, not in prohibitive legislation, but in union and organisation, so that the women in this trade may oppose a solid front to the demands made by avaricious or unscrupulous employers. Let the women of South Staffordshire and East Warwickshire avail themselves of the generous help which is now freely offered to them—mainly through the untiring exertions of Mr. Richard Juggins, secretary of the Midland Counties Trades Federation. Let them take advantage of the terms given by the men of the Nut and Bolt Makers' Union in their district; let them organise and combine with their fellow workers, and they will be able, in no small degree, to better their present position, since that position is admittedly not due to commercial depression nor to the natural inequalities of sex. For the rest it seems to me that co-operation is the surest remedy. Co-operation between employers and employed, which might bring about the substitution of a few large factories for the horrible little back shops and "sweaters'" yards in which so much of the chain and nail making of the Black Country is still carried on, would go far to relieve the misery which appears to be almost as widespread amongst the men as amongst the women now working in those trades.

When we see, for the first time, the hideous results of unchecked competition between women and men, it is only natural that our instant impulse should be to fly to prohibitive legislation; that we should fancy that the only course open to us is the prohibition of women's labour, and her entire relegation to her natural and sacred sphere of home, to the fulfilment in blessed leisure of her natural and sacred functions of mother and wife. But on reflection we see that it is impossible to overlook the conditions which, rightly or wrongly, regulate modern life. The choice for these girls, as for so many others, does not lie between home and the market-place; it lies between the market-place and the streets. Since, therefore, at

the present day so many of our women, if they would live honestly, must needs stand with their men to be hired, the burden laid on us is that of seeing that the conditions of their hiring be to their own utmost advantage, and to the advantage of their comrades in the ranks of industry. Any attempt to legislate against the employment of women's labour, even in such classes of work as may fitly be described as injurious or unsuitable, is likely to inflict evils far deadlier to the woman and the family than it can possibly cure, unless accompanied in each case by the simultaneous opening of some outlet capable of carrying off those whose accustomed channel of industry is no longer free to them.

This point we of the Women's Trades Union League have been called on to fight over and over again: at the forge, in the brickfields, at the pitbrow, the same question has cropped up; almost invariably the leading men in the trades have taken a line in opposition to us, and although, as I have said, we sometimes find unexpected encouragement here and there from a few amongst their ranks, yet up to the present year we have not received anything like general and unanimous support. The men have been as slow to see the necessity for organising the women as the women themselves have been to organise.

When, therefore, our committee agreed that it was desirable that I should accept the invitation which I had received from Mr. Williamson, the minister of the Unitarian Church at Dundee, to visit the town during the week of the Trades Congress and to address meetings of the women employed in the mills and factories of that town and the neighbouring district, I confess that I undertook my mission with very modest expectations as to the results. The first encouraging fact was that the number of the women operatives enrolled, through the efforts of Mr. Williamson, in the Dundee and District Union, was told not by hundreds but by thousands. This seemed to promise well; but, on the night of my arrival, when I went by request to support some fellow workers who were holding a meeting for women engaged in other trades, under the auspices of the Dundee Trades Council, I was once more grievously disappointed. We had a mixed audience of very well-to-do and working folk, but not one would come forward

either to promote or to join a union, and yet they were visibly interested and stirred by what we had to say, and a local reporter recorded that, as he left the room, he heard a young lady declare to her companion: "I was just glad when Lady Dilke left speaking, for I was afraid that before she'd done I would be rolled into doing something!" However, even this young lady escaped us, with all her fellows. The one encouraging feature of the whole proceedings was the presence on the platform of Mr. Eddy, a delegate to Congress from the Glasgow Trades Council, who made a speech remarkable for its manly vigour, strong sympathies, and common-sense, the text of which was that, "although the claims of women in the labour market had hitherto been ignored, the time had come when they would be able to command that justice and that public recognition which men by combination had been able to obtain. Men," said Mr. Eddy, "have been selfish in trying to get their own hours of labour reduced and their remuneration increased, whilst they have allowed women to work in conditions akin to slavery and have not raised their hands to assist them. I hope our friends of the Dundee Trades Council will look into the matter and think shame of themselves."

These words, spoken by Mr. Eddy, prepared me to some extent for the experiences of a most memorable week. The following night, when I gave my first address to the women who thronged the church in Mid-street, I found that the untiring exertions of Mr. Williamson had borne fruit and that I was face to face with just the sort of audience we had begun to despair of meeting. Nearly all present were mill hands or factory operatives, some of the poorest sitting bonnetless close to the platform, and all displaying the keenest and clearest appreciation of what Unionism might do for them, and even of what federation might ultimately do for all the great armies of industry throughout the world. By the door, too, those on the platform soon became conscious of the presence of many of the most important members of the Trades Congress, representatives not only of the so-called conservative but of the "progressive" Trades Unionism of the day. All these were evidently there in support of the cause in which we had laboured so long without encouragement or sympathy from without.

Going north next day, to Arbroath, I found, under Mr. Williamson's auspices, another crowded audience of genuine and enthusiastic working women; and again at Montrose an assembly in the Sheriff Hall, so densely packed that people were carried out fainting. Then, all through these days, our intercourse with the delegates of the various trades councils of the United Kingdom, men whom we had never seen before, their friendly welcome and ready help bore witness to the hold which this great question of the organisation of women's labour had at last, and as it seemed almost suddenly, taken on the minds of men. And not only did we receive tokens of sympathy from convinced and advanced Trades Unionists, but from others who, like Mr. Leng, the recently elected member for Dundee, had not hitherto taken any active part in the movement. He came forward at our first meeting with promises of help, and has now generously made himself responsible for the expenses of a monster entertainment which has been given to members of the Union and their friends, in the Kinnaird Hall, a building which is capable of holding some four or five thousand persons. On my return I visited Glasgow, with like results, over a hundred new members joining the Union, already established there, during a few hours' stay, whilst the invitations which came in to me from all sides to visit other important centres of industry bore witness to the rapidly spreading interest which had begun to be taken in this long neglected work.

Meanwhile, the story of the Great Strike in London was told us day by day. I do not here propose to touch on its general features, on its bearings on trade, or on any of the evils which it necessarily brought in its train, and which I am far from ignoring. I would, however, call attention to the fact that it was pregnant of results possibly unlooked for even by those whose long continued and persistent efforts had brought it about. Space will not allow me to do more than indicate the points at which it appears to me a very distinct and new impression has been made. In the first place, the Trades Unionist movement has received an amount of attention and sympathy from the lay public which is altogether unprecedented, and the large labour subscriptions which came in, especially from Australia, show a great advance in the direction of that general

federation of all classes of industry which is an indispensable condition of efficient Unionism. This advance has brought with it, of necessity, the recognition of the fact that the problem of women's labour, as it stands to-day, can only be solved by the recognition of their claim to be included in the general organisation of industry; therefore, together with all those who have the condition of working women at heart, I am deeply grateful for the change of feeling which seems to have gathered volume and impetus from the circumstances attending the Great Strike. The question has, however, also begun to develop itself on a third line, which I have always expected it to take, which is of immense social importance, but which, as far as I know (with the exception of an excellent article in the *Economist*, September 21st, 1889, headed "Our Casual Labourer"), has received no notice from those who have been writing of the present crisis.

Twelve years ago, when delivering the annual address to a country trade union, I said: "The principles of Trades Unionism, if carried to their logical conclusion, may ultimately furnish the needed check on that surplus loafing population which is the curse of our great cities." It is clear that the first action of a perfectly organised union in any trade must make things worse for the outsiders. This fact, which many have hitherto been inclined to ignore, I now find put with the utmost frankness by such a "progressive" Trades Unionist as Mr. John Law, in the columns of the *Labour Elector*. "When dock work becomes more regular," he says, "a large number of dockers will no doubt be thrust down amongst the loafers, criminals, and semi-criminals, and will starve or go into the workhouse." Nor does Mr. Law shrink from following up his point to its furthest conclusion, to the conclusion to which I drew attention twelve years ago, for he asks: "What can we do with the loafer?" and he answers thus: "I would suggest that the State should send him to a home colony, where he will be kindly treated," and there Mr. Law proposes that the casual and his kind shall be shut up until they die out.

The significance of such a statement as this cannot be exaggerated, showing as it does that in his readiness to deal hard measures to the "loafer" the "progressive" Trades Unionist outruns

anything that has been hitherto put forward by men of the older school. And from this we may infer that the watchword of the future will henceforth be the common cause of labour, whether skilled or unskilled, whether male or female, combined not only against the tyranny of capital (when capital is tyrannous), but to strip off from itself the octopus suckers of the "loafing" element. "There shall be no mercy shown by labour to the casual; leave him," says Labour, "to the ladies and gentlemen; the gospel of self-help loathes philanthropists!"

If, then, we are to be called in the near future to deal with developments of the labour question such as are indicated by the words quoted from Mr. Law above, the due comprehension of the situation concerns us all. If Unionism is to do its full and perfect work, and combination is to support, not injure, then there must be co-operation on the part of all classes in its service. Most strongly would I urge on women the claims of their labouring sisters. Not by mere talking, not by mere gifts of money, but by taking trouble; by taking trouble to master the grave problems of industry; by taking trouble to learn and know first, and then by the devotion of whole-hearted personal service to the work. This is the way in which all work of this kind, if it is to be effectual, must be carried on. It may be more pleasant, it is certainly easier to give individual alms and to receive thanks with a gratified sense of patronage. We want none of such charity; it is only by the intelligent and devoted service of heart and brain that the task we have in hand of spreading the principles of union can be wisely and serviceably prosecuted. We appeal to rich and idle women to help us; and what work can be more righteous, and, in so far as it regards our sisters, more womanly? The gospel of Trades Unionism, rightly understood, is the most Christian gospel that can be preached, but to preach it worthily there must be personal devotion and personal effort; not merely willingness to forego the pleasures of society and the pleasures of charity, but willingness to try to understand the true bearing of the difficult questions, economical and social, which are involved,—and which will often be found to affect the smallest details of a trade organisation,—and willingness to learn also what work really means. It is amiable of highly-cultured women to come

now and again with pretty gowns and pleasant faces to talk kindly sentiment on our behalf from the chair at a public meeting, but it does not really help us who know what the labour and heat of the day mean. If they would only work at the work, if it were only one day a week, it would be better for them and better for those with whom they profess to sympathise.

Now that men have shown the way, it is—I speak specially of women—of the greatest national as well as social importance that we should go out to our sisters in the ranks and teach them how to obtain their share in the benefits of labour organisation. The health of women is of even more vital consequence to the country than that of men. A young girl who spends the best part of her life at the forge, or within the walls of a factory, and taxes her strength to the utmost is little likely to become the mother of healthy children. To our country, therefore, we are doing good service, while to our sisters we are bringing hope, when we call on them to stand out with us and fight with and for their children and their husbands.

People talk of the loneliness of crowned heads! "Gerade die tiefe, so einsam ist wie die hohe!" There is no loneliness like the loneliness of the great deeps! If these pages fall under the eye of any woman who has power enough, heart enough, and leisure enough for the work, I would say, "Forget thyself; go down to work with them that dwell in darkness and the shadow of death, and verily no queenship shall be more royal than thine."

EMILIA F. S. DILKE.

WHO NEXT?

ON THE FRONT OPPOSITION BENCH.

NEARLY fifteen years have elapsed since Mr. Gladstone, writing to "My dear Granville," from 11, Carlton House Terrace, declared that he saw no public advantage in continuing to act as leader of the Liberal party. "At the age of sixty-five, after forty-two years of laborious public life, I think myself entitled to retire on the present opportunity." Since this note of farewell was uttered Mr. Gladstone has lived a life into which has been crammed sufficient to establish the fame of an ordinary man working for the full span of three-score years and ten. There is no doubt that when he penned this letter he truly thought he had lived his life, and that thereafter—like Walpole when he went to the House of Lords, like Peel when he took his seat on a back bench in the House of Commons, or even like Temple when he went to Sheen—he could withdraw himself from participation in political warfare, looking on from the Scœan Gate. How he haunted the Front Opposition Bench with increasing regularity; how, drawn back from time to time into the arena of debate, his supremacy was immediately and irresistibly established; how he thundered against the foreign policy of Lord Beaconsfield; and how finally he flung himself into the fray that gathered around the Bulgarian atrocities, are matters of history. Four years after he had wrung Lord Granville's hand in final adieu to political life, he was carrying the fiery cross through Scotland, and, in his first Midlothian campaign, laying the foundation of the overthrow of the strongest Conservative Government since Peel broke up the Tory party.

Mr. Gladstone's crudescence of vigour and vitality is regular in

rotation and apparently illimitable in potentiality. A period when he seems in lowest water is precisely that which may be counted upon as immediately precedent to a fresh foray. It was from the profound depths of his fall in 1874 that he rose to the heights of 1880. Probably had he in 1886 obtained that overwhelming majority which he besought the nation to give him, so that he might deal with the Irish Question untrammelled by a preponderance of the Irish vote, he would have wearied of public life, and Homer or the Holy Father might once more have lured him into the seclusion of his study. But when he found his Irish policy had rent asunder the Liberal party, a section of which, joining hands with the Conservatives, ousted him from power, the unexpected rebuff sufficed to concentrate all his energies upon the determination once more to acquire supreme power.

Nothing in history equals this spectacle of a statesman now in his eightieth year quietly resolving to consecrate every remaining hour of his life to accomplish a purpose which, regarded at the moment, seemed impossible of achievement. Matters stand very different with the Liberal party to-day than they did in 1886. The nation, consulted on the question of Home Rule then, emphatically declared against it. A majority of 168 in 1885 had been turned in less than twelve months into a minority of 113. A man of forty with a stout heart and high spirit might have cherished the hope that before he died he would change this order of things. But for a man of seventy-seven, with the weight of fifty years' public service on his shoulders, to determine to turn defeat into victory, disaster into triumph, is surely unprecedented in the history of mankind.

According to present appearances there is every prospect of Mr. Gladstone carrying out his undertaking. The limits of resistance are strictly defined. The autumn of 1892, or at latest the spring of the following year, must see a general election, when, if the current of bye-elections affords accurate indication of the drift of public opinion, Mr. Gladstone will be returned to power with a majority not less than that which hailed him chief in 1885. Then he will bring in his Home Rule Bill and, the crowning labour of his life achieved, will quit the stage on which for half a century he has filled so large a part. Thereupon, if accident does not

earlier create the necessity, there will arise the question: Who is to succeed him ?

One thing is clear at the outset. There will be no successor to Mr. Gladstone in his dual capacity of Prime Minister and leader of the House of Commons. There is only one man in the party who could have stepped into both of Mr. Gladstone's shoes. Had Lord Hartington continued to hold the position he filled up to 1886 he would certainly have been Prime Minister in succession to Mr. Gladstone. He gratifies in happy measure that lingering longing for a lord at the head of the State which is not inoperative with public feeling even in these democratic days. But since Lord Hartington is out of the running, the next Liberal Premier will be found in the House of Lords.

The first claim for the distinction undoubtedly rests with Earl Granville. It has been the curious fate of his long and honourable life to be almost within reach of the highest position open to a citizen. He is, in a peculiar degree, representative of man, "not blessed but always to be blest." If it were possible to say of any young man entering Parliament that he was predestined to be Premier, the assertion might safely have been made with respect to Lord Leveson-Gower when he took his seat for Morpeth, in 1836. He had every personal and social advantage. He took to politics and Parliamentary life in the same matter-of-course way as he inherited the family name. Graceful in manner, gifted in mind, an apt debater, a man with a host of friends and probably not a single enemy, he might have been counted upon to march straight on to the Premiership. Thirty years ago, at a memorable political crisis, it seemed that the hour had struck. When in June, 1859, Lord Derby's Government was turned out upon the Vote of No Confidence, in moving which Lord Hartington made his political *début*, the Queen immediately sent for Lord Granville and charged him with the formation of a Government. It was Lord John Russell's cantankerous refusal to serve under a man young enough to be his son that made the task impracticable. What was thought of him and his chances at this period is told by Mr. Charles Greville. "The transaction has been a very advantageous one for Granville," that shrewd observer and well-informed personage wrote

in his diary. "It will inevitably lead sooner or later to his gaining the eminence which he has only just missed now, which would have been full of difficulties and future embarrassments at the present time, but will be comparatively easy hereafter." At least once since then the Premiership has appeared to be within Lord Granville's grasp, but the "hereafter" foreseen by Greville has never come.

The fatality which has pursued Lord Granville through his career will, unfortunately, not be charmed away in these later times. He is the natural successor to Mr. Gladstone as Premier in the Liberal Administration, and his succession would be hailed with acclaim by all sections of the party. But the opportunity comes too late. A growing infirmity of deafness will prove an insuperable bar, and Lord Granville, having for nearly a quarter of a century skirted the preserves of the Premiership, will die outside the fence.

If Lord Granville be too old to obtain the reversion of Mr Gladstone's office, Lord Rosebery is too young. It is true that it is only as days are counted that Lord Rosebery can be spoken of as a young man. He is probably the oldest man for his years in public life. It is very rare in these times that a man is spoken of, or thought of, as being wise. The word in its original meaning, and as an adjective applicable to an individuality, has, somehow, gone out of use, probably because of the only occasional opening for its application. But Lord Rosebery is essentially a man of wisdom. He is a safe man, without the suspicion of dulness that attaches to the appellation. Within the space of three years he has held two offices about as remote from each other as the poles. He has been Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs and he is Chairman of the London County Council, both—though differing in wide degree—positions of great responsibility, requiring high capacity of diverse order. Yet in both Lord Rosebery has achieved unqualified success. His supreme triumph at the Foreign Office is witnessed by the fact that whilst pleasing the Liberal party in his conduct of foreign affairs, he satisfied the Conservatives. At the County Council, though working on a lower level, his success has been even more remarkable. It is not too much to say that there is no other man in England who, neither whipping nor cajoling,

could have brought into working order the motley assemblage elected to the first Metropolitan Parliament.

Lord Rosebery is a born governor of men, wherein he differs absolutely from his friend and chief. He would make a model Speaker of the House of Commons; a Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant who would recall the days of Mr. Drummond; a Lieutenant Governor of Canada who would eclipse the glories of Lord Durham, or a Viceroy of India who would accomplish the hitherto impossible feat of compelling the allegiance of the native races whilst he commanded the respect of the English garrison. This capacity for governing, which Walpole had and Pitt had, which Disraeli had in some measure, and which Mr. Gladstone has not at all, is with Lord Rosebery coupled with the more ordinary gift of public speaking. He is an apt and ready debater, always having something to say and able to clothe it in felicitous language. He is, moreover, blessed with a sense of humour, and in the House of Lords almost as much as in the House of Commons the man of humour is blessed even above the peacemaker.

Lord Rosebery's time will come. He is only in his forty-second year and can afford to wait. In the meantime, with this rich reserve, the Liberal party is fortunate in having in Earl Spencer a potential Premier who will unite its too fluttering forces. Earl Spencer is not a brilliant man like Lord Rosebery. He has not the light touch, nor does he carry the polished arms, of Lord Granville. But he is the kind of man whom people trust, and for parties, like individuals, there is a grateful restfulness in having their affairs committed to the charge of a trusty man. When Lord Spencer is Premier his followers and his colleagues may go to their beds at night without apprehension that the morning papers may bring them news, as it did in 1874, that Parliament is dissolved, or, as it did in 1886, that their leader had become the avowed convert of a political principle which he had for twelve years been stoutly resisting. The doctrine of heredity is justified in Lord Spencer's resemblance to his ancestor Lord Althorpe. It is an old story, but one pleasant to dwell upon, how one night Lord Althorpe, coming down to the House of Commons, was embarrassed by finding he had forgotten a memorandum which had important bearing upon a question under

debate. Certain figures he had collated established the accuracy of the position he and his friends had assumed. If he could only recite them to the House they, too, would be convinced. Not having them he rose, stated that he had gone into the matter, and assured the House that if he had only brought the figures with him they would demonstrate the soundness of his argument. Lord Althorpe's word was sufficient, and his unrecited figures were accepted as settling the question round which parties had been wrangling through the night.

Like Lord Granville, Earl Spencer has, in spite of many temptations, remained a Liberal. His mind, less active than that of Mr. Gladstone, did not wake one morning to find his old convictions on the Irish Question "all dead corpses," like the hosts of Sennacherib when they came up against the fenced cities of Judah. It is true he is now a Home Ruler, whereas four years ago he was not only opposed to Home Rule, but, as Lord Lieutenant, was actively engaged in putting into prison the advocates of Home Rule. Yet public criticism, exceedingly sharp on this question and not loth to fling about sneers at sudden conversions, has spared Lord Spencer. Probably his adhesion to Home Rule has had wider effect among thinking men than any incident in the great transmogrification. Painstaking, prudent, just, chivalrous, a man of great natural capacity and enamoured of hard work, Lord Spencer will not be a brilliant Prime Minister, but he will command both respect and regard.

Considering that even in increasing degree the weight of political power will remain in the House of Commons, Earl Spencer is marked out by special fitness for Premier in the Liberal Administration following upon the retirement of Mr. Gladstone. He will be an admirable counterpoise for the politician whom force of circumstances irresistibly points to as leader of a Liberal House of Commons. It is in this aspect of affairs that the Liberal party is to be condoled with. So recently as 1885 there was a positive embarrassment of riches in the matter of a successor to Mr. Gladstone. There was, as already indicated, standing in the very front line the Marquis of Hartington. But Lord Hartington's hold on the leadership, had it been bestowed upon him, was necessarily slight. It

could only have been a temporary arrangement, and it was of much more importance to decide who should take the seat opposite the brass-bound box in the Commons when the new Duke of Devonshire had lounged into the Lords.

In the spring of 1885 there were two men sitting by Mr. Gladstone's side on the Treasury Bench, one or other of whom, probably each in succession, seemed as certain to lead the House as the sun was sure to rise in the morning. These were Sir Charles Dilke and Mr. Chamberlain. Of the two it was difficult to say which was the more peculiarly fitted for the post of leader. Both were men of business training, both had a remarkable aptitude for public affairs, and each possessed that indefinable quality which makes "a House of Commons man." Mr. Chamberlain had the advantage of his friend and colleague, inasmuch as he was a readier speaker. He is one of the few men who, whilst capable of convincing the critical assembly of the House of Commons, are able to sway a public meeting. Sir Charles Dilke possessed the gift of lucid exposition and, in latter years, had considerably improved in the practice of public speaking. But he fell considerably short of the ease and grace and skill of Mr. Chamberlain, to whom has been justly apportioned the position of the ablest debater in the House of Commons. But while Mr. Chamberlain was more effective in saying something, Sir Charles Dilke had a great deal more to say. For knowledge of affairs or of literature he as far excelled Mr. Chamberlain as Mr. Chamberlain surpassed him in gifts of speech. He was a terribly hard worker, with a perfected system of going about and going to the bottom of whatever business he had in hand, which doubled his capacity. Mr. Gladstone is not often at a loss for a reference on a matter of fact, but he has been heard to say how after Sir Charles Dilke's withdrawal he missed his company in Cabinet Council. If there chanced to be anything on any current topic with respect to which the Premier's memory partially failed him, Sir Charles could always put his finger on the desired reference.

It would have been curious to watch how the pace of the ex-member for Chelsea would have accommodated itself with that of Mr. Chamberlain had they continued to run together. It is probable that had things remained as they were in the spring of

1885, and had Sir Charles Dilke pursued his steady course towards the Premiership, he would have found his personal relationships with Mr. Chamberlain increasingly strained. Mr. Chamberlain may have ceased to posture in politics as a Radical, but he retains the impatience of contradiction which is an indelible mark of Radicalism. His notion of a friend is that of a man who subordinates his will and his interests for friendship's sake. When Sir Charles Dilke and Mr. Chamberlain took office together on the formation of Mr. Gladstone's Ministry in 1880, Sir Charles showed a disposition to fall in with this humour. When the list of the Ministry was published everyone learned with surprise that whilst Mr. Chamberlain was President of the Board of Trade and a Cabinet Minister, Sir Charles Dilke was content with an Under-Secretaryship. Mr. John Morley, who succeeded Sir Charles Dilke in the position of *fidus Achates* to the imperious ex-Mayor of Birmingham, got along very well till he accepted the office of Chief Secretary for Ireland in succession to Sir George Trevelyan. It was understood that that was a post which Mr. Chamberlain had looked upon with a favourable eye as suited to his own capacity. Mr. Gladstone's proffer of it to Mr. John Morley was the beginning of the split in the Liberal party and the end of the friendship between Mr. Chamberlain and Mr. John Morley.

Sir Charles Dilke's withdrawal from Parliamentary life was a distinct, but, it is to be trusted, not irremediable loss to the Liberal party. It, however, left Mr. Chamberlain in undisputed possession of the reversion to the Premiership. He would probably have had a tussle with Sir William Harcourt, but the stronger man would have won. What in the existing state of affairs Mr. Chamberlain's future may be is a problem even more interesting than the curiously cognate one of what is to become of Lord Randolph Churchill. Some onlookers, not unfriendly to him, are driven to the opinion that he will remain a kind of political Mahomet's coffin, pendant between Conservatism and Liberalism, shrinking from entering the one domain, and finding re-entrance to the other implacably barred. Mr. Chamberlain does not share the uncertainty of lookers on. He has made up his mind how things shall shape themselves. He has dreamed a dream of a brand

new party, to be called the National party, and is not to be deterred because his project has been coldly received by his own friends. How big it is to be or how powerful are matters of detail not yet determined. It may be big enough to land its leader in power on the Treasury Bench, or it may be only just large enough in its Parliamentary representation to place him in the position of arbiter between the Ministry of the day and the regular Opposition. When parties are pretty evenly balanced, a compact, well drilled body of fifty, forty, or even thirty men, may hold the destinies of a Ministry or a State in the palm of their hand.

Sir Charles Dilke and Mr. Chamberlain removed from the list of candidates, there remain only two members of the Front Opposition Bench from whom the choice of a successor to Mr. Gladstone in the leadership of the House of Commons must be made. There was a time when it seemed that Mr. John Morley would naturally step into the vacant place. There are probably a good many people both in the House and country who yet think that no better choice could be made. Mr. Morley has that priceless quality noted in Lord Spencer. He is not a mere politician driven hither and thither with every change of expediency. He is a man of strong convictions, who laboriously thinks out all the problems that come before him and holds fast to that which he believes to be true, regardless of the consequences, temporary or permanent, upon his position or his prospects. The House of Commons, the quickest and surest judge of character in the world, recognises this quality and respects John Morley accordingly. It is possible that it sometimes wishes he were a little less prone to take life seriously. If he had now and then a flash of Sir William Harcourt's boisterous humour he would double his chances of the highest advancement. The House of Commons will endure instruction, but it likes to be amused. Mr. Morley never deviates into banter. To him, as to the once famous dog Rab, daily life is a serious thing, and the laughter of fools as the crackling of thorns under the pot.

To do Sir William Harcourt justice, he is not particular as to possible similitudes of laughter so that he can raise it. He stops short of the profligacy of the spendthrift who "had his jest and they had his estate." But he would risk a good deal in order to

gain the meed of laughter. Yet considering how grateful the House of Commons is to any who amuse it, even by the accident of concluding an oration by sitting down on his hat, Sir William Harcourt is not such a success as his endeavours would appear to deserve. Possibly his art lacks something in finish. He is too determinedly funny to secure for his audience that element of surprise which is at the bottom of real humour. Whilst Mr. Disraeli was yet alive and a frequenter of the House of Commons, it was interesting to contrast the different styles in which the two appealed to the risible faculty of their audience. Sir William Harcourt was not above suspicion of taking Mr. Disraeli for a model, but he turned out a very clumsy product. He does much better on the platform in the provinces, where the taste is less exigent and the mannerism less familiar.

The House of Commons often laughs with Sir William Harcourt, sometimes laughs at him, and never believes in him. Rightly or wrongly, it has reached the conclusion that he is not in earnest as Lord Hartington is, and as Mr. John Morley is. That is an initial disadvantage for the leader. But Mr. Disraeli suffered under it to the last, and nevertheless managed to get along excellently well. If Sir William Harcourt is not saturated with conviction, he has the compensatory advantage that he is lighter in movement, more untrammelled in action. He has not the gift of creating warm attachments among those with whom he works, wherein he differs from Mr. Disraeli and in degree resembles Mr. Gladstone. Still a party will put up with a good many things if only they are successfully led, and it is probably only opportunity and undivided responsibility that Sir William Harcourt lacks in order to bring out his full powers. Some indication of this possibility was shown in his conduct of the Tithes Bill in the last weeks of the Session. That little campaign was admirable alike in its conception and in its detail. It is an episode over which Liberal members in the House of Commons like to linger, fondly hoping for the best in an arrangement which, as far as human foresight goes, is inevitable and irrevocable.

THE FATE OF SWAZILAND.

A GLANCE at the map of South Africa will show a strip of country, which is said to measure about eight thousand square miles, lying to the east of the Transvaal and extending to or beyond the Lobombo mountains, between the north of Zululand, the west of Amatongaland, and south-west of the Portuguese possession of Lourenço Marques. This is Swaziland, a territory of which the reader of newspapers has heard somewhat of late days, and is likely to hear more. It is inhabited by a section of the Bantu people who speak the Zulu language and practice Zulu customs, also by a few scores or hundreds of white men of various races, some of them respectable people, others much the reverse. The King of Swaziland can place in the field an army of about fifteen thousand warriors, divided into regiments after the Zulu fashion, and on several occasions these soldiers have done the English Government good service, notably during the last war with Sikukuni, when some thousands of them swept the stronghold of that unhappy chief. The Kings and Chiefs of Swaziland have for many years looked on the Queen of England as their Suzerain, and have always been profuse in their offers of assistance during times of trouble. Thus, when the Boers were beating us during the Transvaal war, Umbandeen, the late King of the Amaswazi, was prevented with difficulty from despatching his regiments to fall upon the victors. Finally he dismissed them, ordering them to "sleep upon their shields, for whenever the Inkosikazi (Queen) of England wants your assistance you will have to give it."* Here it may be stated that Umbandeen is now dead, and his son, who is yet a youth, reigns in his place. Rumour says also that Mr.

* [C.—5,089], p. 66.

Theophilus Shepstone, C.M.G., has been elected to the throne. If this is so, though in the case of an European gentleman the honour is unique, that is, outside the realms of romance, it is probable that Mr. Shepstone will find thorns among his roses. The late King fell a victim to the blessings of civilisation appealing to him chiefly in the shape of champagne, which he persistently drank before lunch time—always a dangerous habit. Other forms of debauchery, and anxiety as to the approaching destruction of his country, may also have hastened his end.

For the rest the Swazis have for many years been an independent people; even T'Chaka and Dingaan failed to subdue them, protected as they were by their own bravery and the formation of their country, which is a land of caves and natural fastnesses.

But Swaziland can boast of more than picturesque scenery and splendid savages with leanings towards beer and bloodshed. Like much of the Transvaal and some of Natal, the country is peculiarly blessed by Nature. It is fertile with that marvellous African fertility which English people can scarcely understand; the climate is lovely, and all the uplands are admirably adapted to Europeans. Lastly, it is said to be a mine of mineral wealth, and especially of gold. Nor do its advantages end there. Amatongaland, which borders Swaziland on the east, is believed to have ports—at least such ports have recently been told of—and the position of Swaziland is such that were a line of railway run through it from one of these ports to the borders of the Transvaal, a trifling distance, an enormous trade would be tapped, and the value of Delagoa Bay, to which the Portuguese cling so desperately, and of which they seem able to make so little use, would undoubtedly be much discounted.*

* The writer is aware that the Portuguese have of late years claimed all seaboard territory up to the watershed of the Lobombo mountains, and are seeking to establish a protectorate over, or even to annex, Amatongaland. This claim seems to be founded on impudence alone. As Mr. Mathers points out in his book, *Golden South Africa*, p. 235, "The native chiefs on the other side of the Bombo have always paid tribute to the Swazi King. The Portuguese did not conquer Umswazie, and certainly they have not caused the Swazis of a later day to succumb to them. Indeed, the Swazis were at the gates of Lourenço Marques not many years ago." At the least, the Power which holds Swaziland will certainly in the end hold Amatongaland also, where harbours are said to exist. It may be remembered that no later than 1888 an embassy from the Queen of Amatongaland or Maputaland waited on the Colonial Office, praying for British protection. I am unable to say whether it was conceded or refused.

The independence of the Swazis is guaranteed by the London Convention of 1884, concluded between the English Government and the representatives of the Transvaal Boers, in modification of the still more famous, or infamous, document of 1881. These are the exact words of Article XII.: "The independence of the Swazis within the boundary line of Swaziland, as indicated in the first article of this Convention, will be fully recognised." There can be no doubt that it has hitherto been recognised by the British Government, and this very much against the will of the Swazis themselves. Now let us see how the Boers have kept their share of the agreement. In September, 1884, Sir Henry Bulwer writes to the High Commissioner that he hears "that the Boers have so overrun the Swazi country that they have only left the district immediately occupied by the King."* In October, 1885, the Natal Secretary for Native Affairs reports to his Government a statement delivered to him by three messengers from the King of Swaziland.† The messengers said that during the winter the well-known Piet Joubert, accompanied by two other Boers, had come to the King's kraal, demanding that Umbandeen should sign a paper stating that he and all the Swazi people agreed to go over to, and recognise the authority of the Boer Government, and have nothing more to do with the English. To this Umbandeen replied, asking how many papers the Boers thought that he was going to sign. He had already signed a paper recognising the English Government, the Government that he still looked to, which his father recognised, and which appointed him chief. Thereon Piet Joubert said that the Boers had defeated the English at Majuba, and that the paper Umbandeen spoke of had decayed. He told him that his English fathers act very slowly, that if he looked to them for help and refused to sign, before they arrived the Boers would have scattered him and his people and have taken his land. Why, then, did he refuse to sign, seeing that the Boers had defeated the English at Majuba? But Umbandeen still refused, although the point was pressed for five days.

Then comes this remarkable passage: "'Mbandine directed me (the messenger) to say that he only recognises the English Govern-

* [C.–4,645], p. 43. † *Ibid.*, p. 64.

ment, and does not wish to have any dealings with the Boers. He looks up to the Governor as his 'Great House,' and asks if he was not right in refusing to sign the paper. Should the Governor say he was doing wrong in refusing to sign the paper, and that he lives too far away to be protected by the English Government, 'Mbandine wishes to impress on the Governor that he does not wish to have anything to do with the Boers, and that he has always recognised the English as his head. Should the Boers now destroy him and his people, he will be destroyed after having appealed to the English, and asked the Government what course he should take in order to avert being destroyed by the Boers. The Boers have encroached, and some of them are living in Swazi country. Taxes have been demanded from some of the Swazi kraals on the borders of Swaziland, and the owners told that if they do not remove or pay they would be eaten up." And so on. Thus, then, within a year from the date of the Convention of London, did the Boers set themselves to preserve the independence of the Swazis.

On January 26th, 1887, Sir Hercules Robinson, the High Commissioner at the Cape, writes to the Secretary of State for the Colonies forwarding another message from Umbandeen, in which the King complains that Abel Erasmus, a Boer Government official —the same gentleman whom Sir Garnet Wolseley once publicly denounced as a fiend in human form—had come with other Boers into his country, accompanied by an armed force and demanded taxes. On being refused, Abel Erasmus seized a large number of cattle, and, so says Umbandeen, "they also took the children belonging to nineteen kraals and refused to give them up, though their parents prayed for their restoration. The inhabitants of these kraals then followed the Boers who had taken their children and have not returned."*

Sir Hercules Robinson comments upon this message in his usual lukewarm style, deprecating interference, which, as he subsequently telegraphs, might cost £8,000 a year. Finally, he makes the following suggestion, a form of insult that came into fashion at the surrender of the Transvaal, and to which loyal folk in

* [C.—5,089], p. 5.

South Africa, whether white or black, must by now be growing well accustomed. (The italics are added): "If then it be decided that her Majesty's Government are not called upon to accept such a responsibility, I think it would be only fair to Umbandeen that he should be so informed. An intimation might also be conveyed to him that if he should be unable to govern the European population scattered throughout Swaziland, and *should desire the South African Republic to annex his country, her Majesty's Government will be prepared to negotiate with the Transvaal Government so as to obtain securities for the preservation of native rights and interests.*"

It is indeed easy to imagine the gratitude with which the Swazi people must have received this announcement, thinking the while of their lost cattle and of the children of the nineteen kraals. Comment is really superfluous, but let the reader remember that this despatch was written by no inexperienced person. It was written by the high official who, with few exceptions, is of all men most laden with the shame and sorrow of the Transvaal Convention; who, at the time, had the recent fate of Zululand before his eyes; who had before his eyes the example of Monkarane and Montsioa saved from the Boers, not by his efforts, but rather by those of that single-hearted and unselfish man, the Rev. John Mackenzie, and of Sir Charles Warren, backed by English public opinion. As he wrote the above passage that occasion must yet have been fresh in his mind, when, on the retrocession, in the presence of the assembled native chiefs of the Transvaal, who represented nearly a million subjects of the Queen, it became his duty to read a celebrated document in which they were informed of their abandonment to the Boers, "whose representatives, Messrs. Kruger, Pretorius, and Joubert, I now"—said Sir Hercules—"have much pleasure in introducing to you." Although after this formality he hastily withdrew, Sir Hercules Robinson may even have heard of the scene that followed when chief after chief bitterly protested against the cruel infamy of the deed, even with tears, as in the case of Jan Sibilo, who "could not restrain his feelings but cried like a child."

And yet with all these matters present in his mind, with the complaints of the Swazis ringing in his ears, Sir Hercules Robinson

could suggest the annexation of their country to the Transvaal as a remedy for their wrongs. Thus are fashioned the politicians of the school of Lord Derby. So large-hearted and impartial are they that they find but a Christian duty in turning their country's cheek to the hand of the smiter, and in the abandonment of our faithful friends and fellow subjects to the mercies of an hereditary foe. Should the Dutch element ultimately triumph in the great struggle for African supremacy, it is quite conceivable that in generations to come their cities will be adorned with statues of that benefactor of the Dutch, Sir Hercules Robinson. But will the Englishmen of the future find cause to bless his name, and what will the natives say of it if they still know it?

The narrow limits of a Review article do not, unfortunately, allow me space to set out other Swazi grievances against the Boers. The curious may find much reading of the sort in Blue-book [C.—5,089], where the question is summed up in various reports and minutes by Mr. H. C. Shepstone, the Natal Secretary for Native Affairs. Mr. Shepstone more than once points out that great consideration is due to Umbandeen, who has always been a faithful ally of the English Government, whose subject he considered himself to be; and that the King has acted throughout with much patience, never taking the law into his own hands, but contenting himself with reporting to the representatives of the Queen, "hitherto, I regret to say," Mr. Shepstone adds, "without the consideration I think he was entitled to expect."

It is but fair to the Boers to add that their Government denies, repudiates, explains the various charges made against them by the Swazis, and that Sir Hercules Robinson considers these "explanations and assurances" to be satisfactory,* and to afford evidence that "exaggerated or unfounded" rumours have been circulated for interested objects. Sir A. Havelock, the Governor of Natal, did not, however, share this view, since he states in a despatch which Sir Hercules must have had before him when he thus advised the Home Government: "There is little doubt, I fear, that the encroachments of the Boers in Swaziland, unless checked, will end in the occupa-

* [C.—5,089], p. 47.

tion of the whole or of the greater part of the country."* Nor indeed was it a view taken by the Swazis themselves, for, when informed of the denials of the Transvaal Government, "all they said was that they were not surprised, as it was the custom of the Boers to deny what it was inconvenient to admit."† It is probable that any student of South African history will come to much the same conclusion. The truth is that Boer Governments only recognise these acts of aggression if they prove successful, even when, as in the case of Swaziland, they are for the most part carried out by their own officials. Thus, while the same process was going on in Zululand, Sir Hercules Robinson remonstrated as usual, and was informed that the Boer Government could not "interfere at all in the matter in question" since its subjects were entering the country without authority. But has this incapacity prevented more than a third of the richest part of Zululand from being absorbed into Transvaal territory?

As time went on the state of affairs grew more and more desperate in Swaziland. On the one hand was the assegai of Boer encroachment, on the other the dead wall of British indifference, and between the two, as it were, rose the incessant clamour of greedy concessionaires. In his despair, on December 10th, 1886, Umbandeen formally appointed Mr. Theophilus Shepstone, C.M.G., to be his agent and adviser. This appointment the home Government declined to recognise, fearing responsibility. But there is good reason to believe—though apparently this is a view which Sir H. Robinson does not share—that the appointment, if it did nothing else, saved Swaziland from being "rushed" by the Boers. Mr. Mathers, in his book, *Golden South Africa*, expresses this opinion very distinctly. He says (p. 227): "All plans were, I am assured, made for invading the country some time in April—the 5th was the date fixed for the enterprise, I am told—and there is little doubt but that these plans would have been carried out had Mr. Shepstone not been appointed to the position he now occupies."

To sum up. The independence of the Swazis was guaranteed by Clause XII. of the Convention of London. Both the spirit and

* [C.—5,089], p. 32 † *Ibid.*, p. 13.

the letter of that clause have been broken by Boer subjects, and any implied agreement is therefore at an end. The Swazis have again and again implored our protection. Under these circumstances are we bound, is there even a moral obligation on us, to withhold that protection? To answer this question the more completely two others may be put. In whose interest was the independence of Swaziland guaranteed? And to whose interest would it be that this independence should be merged in the British Empire? The answer is obvious—in that of the Swazi people. Under these circumstances it would be natural to conclude that the Government are making preparations to annex Swaziland, or, at the least, adequately to protect it. But if rumour is to be believed —and it must be remembered that though the charge has been persistently advanced in the Press and elsewhere it remains uncontradicted—the Government are actually making preparations to hand over Swaziland and its inhabitants to the power of the Transvaal. The strongest disclaimer of any such disastrous intention that I am able to discover is to be found in a letter written by the direction of Lord Knutsford to the Aborigines Protection Society, on October 31st last. It says that "Sir Francis de Winton's mission to Swaziland is one of inquiry, with a view to enabling her Majesty's Government to decide what course it is most desirable to take in regard to that country, in the interests of both natives and white settlers, and of South Africa generally; and that whatever course may be ultimately decided upon, the interests of the natives will be carefully kept in view, and their wishes will receive due consideration." The reader may form his own opinion of the value of this guarded communication. If Lord Knutsford means that Swaziland is not to be surrendered, why does he not say so instead of beating about the bush? It will be observed, however, that he is careful to say nothing of the sort. Some people may have noticed also that the reports of Commissioners from the Colonial Office have generally a family resemblance to the views held by the Office at the moment; also that the "interests of the natives" are often found to coincide with the wishes of her Majesty's Government. So it was at least in the respective cases of the Transvaal Surrender and the partition of Zululand.

In the newspaper telegrams of this day on which I write it is stated that Sir Francis de Winton, the Imperial Commissioner, is at present on a mission of inquiry in Swaziland, accompanied by two Boer delegates, one of whom is named Joubert, perhaps that very Mr. Joubert of whose acts the Swazis have so bitterly complained. If fresh inquiry is necessary, are we not competent to make it for ourselves without further reference to the Boer Government? *

This tale of contemplated surrender seems incredible, but nothing is incredible to those who have studied the record of Colonial Office policy in Southern Africa for the last ten years. There is no one thing of which an English Government is not capable when an opening affords itself to escape responsibility abroad. Neither national honour, nor expediency, nor policy, nor profit will suffice to stay the destroying hand of the Colonial Office. How has South Africa been governed of late years? Has it been governed in the interest of the Empire, in the interest of the British Colonists, or in the interest of the natives? In none of these. It has been governed with scarce a particle of honesty, but almost purely to the supposed advantage of the Government of the day, and with the view of catching votes or avoiding censure. When justice has been done, it has been done because the force of public opinion has made it dangerous to be unjust. Were it not for the native grit and determination of Englishmen abroad, little indeed would remain to us of our South African Empire to-day. The richest country in the world, the Transvaal territory, in obedience to the armed force of a small section of its inhabitants, and to clamour raised for party

* Since the above was written a telegram has been published, dated Durban, 11th December, in which it is announced that Sir Francis de Winton has met a hundred headmen of the Swazi nation, to whom he announced that the object of his mission was to preserve the independence of the nation. If this is so, the thing is not difficult. Let the Government warn the Boers off Swaziland and then either annex or proclaim a protectorate over the country. Thus only at this hour can the independence of the Swazis be preserved, paradoxical as the statement seems. But it is clear that the Government has no such heroic intentions—the Transvaal authorities are to have at least an equal voice in the matter, for in this one telegram it is twice stated that certain arrangements are to be made "pending the decision of the British and the Transvaal Governments." It may be asked, therefore, if the object of the Boers is also like that of Sir Francis de Winton, to "preserve the independence of the nation"? If it is not, how is the matter to be settled in the face of a radical difference of opinion between two Powers with an equal vote?

purposes at home, has been thrown away like a worthless rag, and that in the face of the protests of a million natives, the true owners of the land, and of every loyal man, Dutch or English, in South Africa. Zululand has been dismembered ; the spirit of disaffection has been tacitly encouraged ; the natives have been estranged.

If, indeed, it is true that the Government secretly purposes the virtual surrender of Swaziland to the Boers—a thing which the present writer even now refuses to credit—it has been argued that this is done with a purpose—to buy, in sooth, a right of franchise for the British-born inhabitants of the Transvaal, who are now supposed to number considerably more than the entire Boer population. If this is the case, would not the Government do well to leave the matter alone? Icebergs float for a while steadily as mountains, half above the water, half beneath it. But the sea is ever eating at their foundations, and, almost without warning, they turn over like the Empire of Brazil, and what was the top becomes the bottom. This is what must happen in the Transvaal if the inrush of English gold-seekers continues. At present the Boers are the visible portion of the political iceberg, but the flood of immigration is at work beneath, and a day must come when the position will be reversed and that suddenly.

It may be said : Why, then, not allow the Boers to take Swaziland, since they themselves are destined to be peaceably submerged with all that is theirs? For two reasons. First, because of the natives, to whom we are under great obligations and whom it is our duty to protect. Secondly, because, when the transformation occurs, in all probability it will not bring about a reunion of the Transvaal to the British Empire, and the Empire should look after its own interests and save what it can from the wreck. Let not Englishmen be deceived. Very many even of our own kin in South Africa wish to be free of us. Respect for the British Government died upon the market-square of Newcastle, in the unforgetable hour when some four thousand refugees and loyalists learned that they were ruined, deserted, and handed over to the victors of Majuba. Those who saw that painful scene, and heard the bitter curses wrung from the shame of Englishmen, now for the first time utterly humbled, could scarcely mistake its import. If the Transvaal becomes British

again, it will probably be as an independent Republic, not as a possession of the Empire.

And yet, although a great colonial authority has declared the contrary, there is still room for Imperialism in South Africa. The stars in their courses have fought for us; our rule has not been utterly destroyed by our own wantonness and folly. That day indeed has gone by when, for the asking, Africa might have been ours from the Somali country to Cape Agulhas; but we still have many footholds in the land, and could a Government be found that would consent to march forward to a definite end much might yet be regained. It is useless to blink the fact that a great struggle is in progress of which the issue is—shall Dutch or English rule in Southern Africa? Many of us have respect for the Boers, however much we may disapprove of their policy and mode of government, a respect that has been increased by their brave and successful conduct of the Transvaal rebellion. The writer is one of these. But we are fighting for our flag and for the future of our race in those latitudes, and therefore should scarcely allow a doubtful sentiment of respect to carry us away. And for the rest, can it be argued that British rule is not better than Boer rule, and have we not duties towards the natives? The black man, indeed, is doomed; the end may be far off, but it will come; in three more generations few Kaffirs will be left in the richer and more accessible portions of the home of their forefathers. They will be driven north, or they will melt away, crowded out by the teeming thousands of superior blood and race. This is a decree of Providence which we cannot alter; the earth is to the strongest. But at least we can protect these doomed races from war and injustice, and allow Destiny to do the work in her own gentler fashion. As has been said, South Africa hitherto has been governed for party purposes, and almost entirely with a view to party gain. Can no rulers be found who will adopt another attitude, who, like Gunnar, the hero of Norse song, will not yield a single inch, but who will go forward, heedless of Boers, Germans, or Portuguese, and the obstructive efforts of disloyal subjects of the Crown; working no wrong or violence indeed, but remembering that here they have a vast and splendid national inheritance which it is their duty to guard, to augment, and to pass on for the benefit of future generations of

Englishmen? Surely there are many, both here and in South Africa, who now cry, "A plague on both your houses," but who would support such a policy with heart and soul. But if this rumour is true, if Swaziland is to go the way of the Free State, the Transvaal, and parts of Zululand, and to be handed over to the Boers, what is there more to say? One thing only, that this way madness lies.

What should be the South African policy of an English Government to-day? Should it not be to strain every nerve to retrieve the errors, the folly unashamed, I might almost say the wickedness of the past? And how can this best be done? Obviously by the strict enforcement of such suzerain rights as remain to us under the Convention of London, by enclosing the anti-English area within the straitest possible limits, and then by leaving the political forces thus confined to work out their natural ends. But to surrender Swaziland upon some wretched plea of expediency, or for some wretched equivalent in rights of franchise or railways, will be to extend that area, and more: to give it access to the sea. Yet, unless public opinion can be stirred, and it is always torpid on such matters and easy to satisfy, Swaziland will be surrendered, in fact if not in name, subject probably to worthless paper guarantees. If there is an Irish grievance, or even a scandal, to be aired, members can readily be found to move the adjournment of the House. Will none move it on this great matter, or, as Umbandeen said, do the Swazis live "too far away to be protected by the Government"? If they do, if their fate is a thing indifferent to us, at least our own interest is close at hand and obvious. Let Englishmen ask themselves what step any foreign nation, the Germans for instance, would take if they saw an empire slipping from their grasp. Then, if we have not become quite flaccid and invertebrate, if any of our ancient vigour is left to us, let us speak and act in a fashion that will force the Government to listen, and act in its turn—if it has not lost the art.

H. RIDER HAGGARD.

THE SOLUTION.

IN THREE PARTS.

PART II.

THERE was nothing extraordinary in my going to see Mrs. Rushbrook, but there was something very extraordinary in my taking such an hour for the purpose. I was supposed to be settled in Rome again, but it was ten o'clock at night when I turned up at the old inn at Albano. Mrs. Rushbrook had not gone to bed, and she greeted me with a certain alarm, though the theory of our intercourse was that she was always glad to see me. I ordered supper and a room for the night, but I couldn't touch the repast before I had been ushered into the vast and vaulted apartment which she used as a parlour, the florid bareness of which would have been vulgar in any country but Italy. She asked me immediately if I had brought bad news, and I replied, "Yes, but only about myself. That's not exactly it," I added; "it's about Henry Wilmerding."

"Henry Wilmerding?" She appeared for the moment not to recognise the name.

"He's going to marry Veronica Goldie."

Mrs. Rushbrook stared. "*Que me contez-vous là?* Have you come all this way to tell me that?"

"But he is—it's all settled—it's awful!" I went on.

"What do I care, and what do you mean?"

"I've got into a mess, and I want you to advise me and to get me out of it," I persisted.

"My poor friend, you must make it a little clearer then," she smiled. "Sit down, please—and have you had your dinner?"

She had been sitting at one end of her faded saloon, where, as

the autumn night was fresh at Albano, a fire of faggots was crackling in the big marble-framed cavern of the chimney. Her books, her work, her materials for writing and sketching, were scattered near: the place was a comfortable lamplit corner in the general blankness. There was a piano near at hand, and beyond it were the doors of further chambers, in one of which my hostess's little daughter was asleep. There was always something vaguely annoying to me in these signs of occupation and independence: they seemed to limit the ground on which one could appeal to her for one's self.

"I'm tired and I'm hungry," I said, "but I can't think of my dinner till I've talked to you."

"Have you come all the way from Rome?"

"More than all the way, because I've been at Frascati."

"And how did you get here?"

"I hired a chaise and pair at Frascati—the man drove me over."

"At this hour? You weren't afraid of brigands?"

"Not when it was a question of seeing you. You must do something for me—you must stop it."

"What must I do, and what must I stop?" Mrs. Rushbrook questioned, sitting down.

"This odious union—it's too unnatural."

"I see, then. Veronica's to marry someone, and you want her for yourself."

"Don't be cruel, and don't torment me—I'm sore enough already. You know well enough whom I want to marry," I broke out.

"How can I stop anything?" Mrs. Rushbrook asked.

"When I see you this way, at home, between the fire and the lamp, with the empty place beside you—an image of charming domesticity—do you suppose I have any doubt as to what I want?'

She rested her eyes on the fire, as if she were turning my words over as an act of decent courtesy and of pretty form. But immediately afterwards she said: "If you've come out here to make love to me, please say so at once, so that we may have it over on the spot. You will gain nothing whatever by it."

"I'm not such a fool as to have given you such a chance to snub me. That would have been presumptuous, and what is at the

bottom of my errand this evening is extreme humility. Don't therefore think you've gained the advantage of putting me in my place. You've done nothing of the sort, for I haven't come out of it—except, indeed, so far as to try a bad joke on Wilmerding. It has turned out even worse than was probable. You're clever, you're sympathetic, you're kind."

"What has Wilmerding to do with that?"

"Try and get him off. That's the sort of thing a woman can do."

"I don't in the least follow you, you know. Who is Wilmerding?"

"Surely you remember him—you've seen him at Frascati, the young American secretary—you saw him a year ago in Rome. The fellow who is always opening the door for you and finding the things you lose."

"The things I lose?"

"I mean the things women lose. He went with us the other day to Monte Cavo."

"And got himself lost with the girl? Oh yes, I recall him," said Mrs. Rushbrook.

"It was the darkest hour of his life—or rather of mine. I told him that after that the only thing he could do was to marry Veronica. And he has believed me."

"Does he believe everything you tell him?" Mrs. Rushbrook asked.

"Don't be impertinent, because I feel very wretched. He loathes Veronica."

"Then why does he marry her?"

"Because I worked upon him. It's comical—yet it's dreadful."

"Is he an idiot—can't he judge for himself?" said Mrs. Rushbrook.

"He's marrying her for good manners. I persuaded him they require it."

"And don't they, then?"

"Not the least in the world!"

"Was that *your* idea of good manners? Why did you do it?"

"I didn't—I backed out, as soon as I saw he believed me. But

it was too late. Besides, a friend of mine had a hand in it—he went further than I. I may as well tell you that it's Guy de Montaut, the little Frenchman of the embassy, whom you'll remember—he was of our party at Monte Cavo. Between us, in pure sport and without meaning any harm, we have brought this thing on. And now I'm devoured with remorse—it wasn't a creditable performance."

"What was the beauty of the joke?" Mrs. Rushbrook inquired, with exasperating serenity.

"Don't ask me now—I don't see it! It seems to me hideous."

"And M. de Montaut—has he any compunction?"

"Not a bit—he looks at it from the point of view of the Goldies. Veronica is a *fille sans dot*, and not generally liked; therefore with poor prospects. He has put a husband in her way—a rich, good-natured young man, without encumbrances and of high character. It's a service, where a service was needed, of which he is positively proud."

Mrs. Rushbrook looked at me reflectively, as if she were trying to give me her best attention and to straighten out this odd story.

"Mr. Wilmerding is rich?" she asked in a moment.

"Dear me, yes—very well off."

"And of high character?"

"An excellent fellow—without a fault."

"I don't understand him, then."

"No more do I!"

"Then what can we do? How can we interfere?" my companion went on.

"That's what I want you to tell me. It's a woman's business—that's why I've tumbled in on you here. You must invent something, you must attempt something."

"My dear friend, what on earth do I care for Mr. Wilmerding?"

"You ought to care—he's a knight of romance. Do it for me, then."

"Oh, for you!" my hostess laughed.

"Don't you pity me—doesn't my situation appeal to you?"

"Not a bit! It's grotesque."

"That's because you don't know."

"What is it I don't know?"

"Why, in the first place, what a particularly shabby thing it was to play such a trick on Wilmerding—a gentleman and a man that never injured a fly; and, in the second place, how miserable he'll be and how little comfort he'll have with Veronica."

"What's the matter with Veronica—is she so bad?"

"You know them all—one doesn't want to marry them. Fancy putting one's self deliberately under Mrs. Goldie's heel! The great matter with Veronica is that, left to himself, he would never have dreamed of her. That's enough."

"You say he hasn't a fault," Mrs. Rushbrook replied. "But isn't it rather a fault that he's such a booby?"

"I don't know whether it's because I'm rather exalted, rather morbid, in my reaction against my momentary wantonness, that he strikes me as so far from being a booby that I really think what he has engaged to do is very fine. If without intending it, and in ignorance of the social perspective in a country not his own, he has appeared to go so far that they have had a right to expect he would go further, he's willing to pay the penalty. Poor fellow, he pays for all of us."

"Surely he's very meek," said Mrs. Rushbrook. "He's what you call a muff."

"*Que voulez-vous?* He's simple—he's generous."

"I see what you mean—I like that."

"You would like him if you knew him. He has acted like a gallant gentleman—from a sense of duty."

"It *is* rather fine," Mrs. Rushbrook murmured.

"He's too good for Veronica," I continued.

"And you want me to tell her so?"

"Well, something of that sort. I want you to arrange it."

"I'm much obliged—that's a fine large order!" my companion laughed.

"Go and see Mrs. Goldie, intercede with her, entreat her to let him go, tell her that they really oughtn't to take advantage of a momentary aberration, an extravagance of magnanimity."

"Don't you think it's *your* place to do all that?"

"Do you imagine it would do any good—that they would release him?" I demanded.

"How can I tell? You could try. Is Veronica very fond of him?" Mrs. Rushbrook pursued.

"I don't think any of them can really be very fond of anyone who isn't 'smart.' They want certain things that don't belong to Wilmerding at all—to his nationality or his type. He isn't at all 'smart,' in their sense."

"Oh yes, *their* sense: I know it. It's not a nice sense!" Mrs. Rushbrook exclaimed, with a critical sigh.

"At the same time Veronica is dying to be married, and they are delighted with his money. It makes up for deficiencies," I explained.

"And is there so much of it?"

"Lots and lots. I know by the way he lives."

"An American, you say? One doesn't know Americans."

"How do you mean, one doesn't know them?"

"They're vague to me. One doesn't meet many."

"More's the pity, if they're all like Wilmerding. But they can't be. You must know him—I'm sure you'll like him."

"He comes back to me; I see his face now," said Mrs. Rushbrook. "Isn't he rather good-looking?"

"Well enough; but I'll say he's a beautiful antique statue, if it will interest you for him."

"What I don't understand is *your* responsibility," my friend remarked, after a moment. "If he insists and persists, how is it your fault?"

"Oh, it all comes back to that. I put it into his head—I perverted his mind. I started him on the fatal course—I administered the primary push."

"Why can't you confess your misdemeanour to him, then?"

"I *have* confessed—that is, almost. I attenuated, I retracted, when I saw how seriously he took it; I did what I could to pull him back. I rode after him to-day and almost killed my horse. But it was no use—he had moved so abominably fast."

"How fast do you mean?"

"I mean that he had proposed to Veronica a few hours after I

first spoke to him. He couldn't bear it a moment longer—I mean the construction of his behaviour as shabby."

"He *is* rather a knight!" murmured Mrs. Rushbrook.

"*Il est impayable*, as Montaut says. Montaut practised upon him without scruple. I really think it was Montaut who settled him."

"Have you told him, then, it was a trick?" my hostess demanded.

I hesitated. "No, not quite that."

"Are you afraid he'll cut your throat?"

"Not in the least. I would give him my throat if it would do any good. But he would cut it and then cut his own. I mean he'd still marry the girl."

"Perhaps he *does* love her," Mrs. Rushbrook suggested.

"I wish I could think it!"

She was silent a moment; then she asked: "Does he love someone else?"

"Not that I know of."

"Well then," said Mrs. Rushbrook, "the only thing for you to do, that I can see, is to take her off his hands."

"To take Veronica off?"

"That would be the only real reparation. Go to Mrs. Goldie to-morrow and tell her your little story. Say: 'I want to prevent the marriage, and I've thought of the most effective thing. If *I* will take her, she will let him go, won't she? Therefore consider that I *will* take her.'"

"I would almost do that; I have really thought of it," I answered. "But Veronica wouldn't take *me*."

"How do you know? It's your duty to try."

"I've no money."

"No, but you're 'smart.' And then you're charming."

"Ah, you're cruel—you're not so sorry for me as I should like!" I returned.

"I thought that what you wanted was that I should be sorry for Mr. Wilmerding. You must bring him to see me," said Mrs. Rushbrook.

"And do you care so little about me that you could be witness

of my marrying another woman like that? I enjoy the way you speak of it!" I cried.

"Wouldn't it all be for your honour? That's what I care about," she laughed.

"I'll bring Wilmerding to see you to-morrow: *he'll* make you serious," I declared.

"Do; I shall be delighted to see him. But go to Mrs. Goldie, too—it *is* your duty."

"Why mine only? Why shouldn't Montaut marry her?"

"You forget that he has no compunction."

"And is that the only thing you can recommend?"

"I'll think it over—I'll tell you to-morrow," Mrs. Rushbrook said. "Meanwhile, I do like your American—he sounds so unusual." I remember her exclaiming further, before we separated. "Your poor Wilmerding—he *is* a knight! But for a diplomatist—fancy!"

It was agreed between us the next day that she should drive over to Frascati with me; and the vehicle which had transported me to Albano and remained the night at the hotel conveyed us, before noon, in the opposite sense, along the side of the hills and the loveliest road in the world—through the groves and gardens, past the monuments and ruins and the brown old villages with feudal and papal gateways that overhang the historic plain. If I begged Mrs. Rushbrook to accompany me there was always reason enough for that in the extreme charm of her society. The day moreover was lovely, and a drive in those regions was always a drive. Besides, I still attached the idea of counsel and aid to Mrs. Rushbrook's presence, in spite of her not having as yet, in regard to my difficulty, any acceptable remedy to propose. She had told me she would try to think of something, and she now assured me she had tried, but the happy idea that would put everything right had not descended upon her. The most she could say was that probably the marriage wouldn't really take place. There was time for accidents; I should get off with my fright; the girl would see how little poor Wilmerding's heart was in it and wouldn't have the ferocity to drag him to the altar. I endeavoured to take that view, but through my magnifying

spectacles I could only see Veronica as ferocious, and I remember saying to Mrs. Rushbrook, as we journeyed together, "I wonder if they would take money."

"Whose money—yours?"

"Mine—what money have I? I mean poor Wilmerding's."

"You can always ask them—it's a possibility," my companion answered; from which I saw that she quite took for granted I would intercede with the Honourable Blanche. This was a formidable prospect, a meeting on such delicate ground, but I steeled myself to it in proportion as I seemed to perceive that Mrs. Rushbrook held it to be the least effort I could reputably make. I desired so to remain in her good graces that I was ready to do anything that would strike her as gallant—I didn't want to be so much less of a "knight" than the wretched Wilmerding. What I most hoped for—secretly, however, clinging to the conception of a clever woman's tact as infinite—was that she would speak for me, either to Mrs. Goldie or to Veronica herself. She had powers of manipulation and she would manipulate. It was true that she protested against any such expectation, declaring that intercession on her part would be in the worst possible taste, and would moreover be attributed to the most absurd motives: how could I fail to embrace a truth so flagrant? If she was still supposed to be trying to think of something, it was something that *I* could do. Fortunately she didn't say again to me that the solution was that I should "take over" Veronica; for I could scarcely have endured that. You may ask why, if she had nothing to suggest and wished to be out of it, if above all she didn't wish, in general, to encourage me, she should have gone with me on this occasion to Frascati. I can only reply that that was her own affair, and I was so far from quarrelling with such a favour that as we rolled together along the avenues of ilex, in the exquisite Roman weather, I was almost happy.

I went straight to Mrs. Goldie's residence, as I should have gone to a duel, and it was agreed that Mrs. Rushbrook should drive on to the Villa Mondragone, where I would rejoin her after the imperfect vindication of my honour. The Villa Mondragone—you probably remember its pompous, painted, faded extent and its magnificent terrace—was open to the public, and any lover of old

Rome was grateful for a pretext for strolling in its picturesque, neglected, enchanted grounds. It had been a resource for all of us at Frascati, but Mrs. Rushbrook had not seen so much of it as the rest of us or as she desired.

I may as well say at once that I shall not attempt to make my encounter with the terrible dowager a vivid scene to you, for to this day I see it only through a blur of embarrassment and confusion, a muddle of difficulties suspended like a sort of enlarging veil before a monstrous Gorgon face. What I had to say to Mrs. Goldie was in truth neither easy nor pleasant, and my story was so abnormal a one that she may well have been excused for staring at me, with a stony refusal to comprehend, while I stammered it forth. I was even rather sorry for her, inasmuch as it was not the kind of appeal that she had reason to expect, and as her imagination had surely never before been led such a dance.

I think it glimmered upon her at first, from my strange manner, that I had come to ask for one of the other girls; but that illusion cannot have lasted long. I have no idea of the order or succession of the remarks that we exchanged; I only recall that at a given moment Mrs. Goldie rose, in righteous wrath, to cast me out of her presence. Everything was a part of the general topsy-turviness; for the house had been agitated by the sudden determination of its mistress to return to Rome. Of this she informed me as soon as I presented myself, and she apprised me in the same breath, you may be sure, of the important cause. Veronica's engagement had altered all their plans; she was to be married immediately, absence and delay being incompatible with dear Henry's official work (I winced at "dear Henry"), and they had no time to lose for conference with dressmakers and shopkeepers. Veronica had gone out for a walk with dear Henry; and the other girls, with one of the maids, had driven to Rome, at an early hour, to see about putting to rights the apartment in Via Babuino. It struck me as characteristic of the Honourable Blanche that *she* had remained on the spot, as if to keep hold of dear Henry.

These announcements gave me, of course, my opening. "Can't you see he is only going through with it as a duty? Do you mean to say you were not very much surprised when he proposed?" I

fearlessly demanded. I maintained that it was *not* a duty—that Wilmerding had a morbid sense of obligation and that at that rate anyone of us might be hauled up for the simple sociability, the innocent conviviality of youth. I made a clean breast of it and tried to explain the little history of my unhappy friend's mistake. I am not very proud of any part of my connection with this episode; but though it was a delicate matter to tell a lady that it had been a blunder to offer marriage to her daughter, what I am on the whole least ashamed of is the manner in which I fronted the Honourable Blanche. I was supported by the sense that she was dishonest in pretending that she had not been surprised—that she had regarded our young man as committed to such a step. This was rubbish—her surprise had been at least equal to her satisfaction. I was irritated by her quick assumption, at first, that if I wanted the engagement broken it was because I myself was secretly enamoured of the girl. Before I went away she put me to the real test, so that I was not able to say afterwards to Mrs. Rushbrook that the opportunity to be fully heroic had not been offered me. She gave me the queerest look I had ever seen a worldly old woman give, and proffered an observation of which the general copious sense was this:

"Come, I do see what you mean, and though you have made a pretty mess with your French monkey-tricks, it may be that if dear Henry's heart isn't in it it simply isn't, and that my sweet, sensitive girl will in the long run have to pay too much for what looks now like a tolerably good match. It isn't so brilliant after all, for what do we really know about him or about his obscure relations in the impossible country to which he may wish to transplant my beloved? He has money, or rather expectations, but he has nothing else, and who knows about American fortunes? Nothing appears to be settled or entailed. Take her yourself and you may have her—I'll engage to make it straight with Mr. Wilmerding. You're impecunious and you're disagreeable, but you're clever and well-connected; you'll rise in your profession—you'll become an ambassador." All this (it was a good deal), Mrs. Goldie communicated to me in the strange, prolonged, confidential leer with which she suddenly honoured me. It was a good deal, but it was not all,

for I understood her still to subjoin : "That will show whether you are sincere or not in wishing to get your friend out of his scrape. It's the only condition on which you can do it. Accept this condition and I will kindly overlook the outrage of your present intrusion and your inexpressible affront to my child."

No, I couldn't tell Mrs. Rushbrook that I had not had my chance to do something fine, for I definitely apprehended this proposition, I looked it well in the face and I sadly shook my head. I wanted to get Wilmerding off, but I didn't want to get him off so much as that.

"Pray, is he aware of your present extraordinary proceeding?" Mrs. Goldie demanded, as she stood there to give me my *congé*.

"He hasn't the faintest suspicion of it."

"And may I take the liberty of inquiring whether it is your design to acquaint him with the scandalous manner in which you have betrayed his confidence?". She was wonderfully majestic and *digne*.

"How can I?" I asked, piteously. "How can I, without uttering words not respectful to the young lady he now stands pledged to marry? Don't you see how that has altered my position?" I wailed.

"Yes, it has given you a delicacy that is wondrous indeed!" cried my hostess, with a laugh of derision which rang in my ears as I withdrew—which rings in my ears at this hour.

I went to the Villa Mondragone, and there, at the end of a quarter of an hour's quest, I saw three persons—two ladies and a gentleman—coming toward me in the distance. I recognised them in a moment as Mrs. Rushbrook, Veronica Goldie, and Wilmerding. The combination amused and even gratified me, as it fell upon my sight, for it immediately suggested that, by the favour of accident, Mrs. Rushbrook would already have had the advantage of judging for herself how little one of her companions was pleased with his bargain, and be proportionately stimulated to come to his rescue. Wilmerding had turned out to spend a perfunctory hour with his betrothed ; Mrs. Rushbrook, strolling there and waiting for me, had met them, and she had remained with them on perceiving how glad they were to be relieved of the grimness of their union. I

pitied the mismated couple, pitied Veronica almost as much as my more particular victim, and reflected as they came up to me that unfortunately our charming friend would not always be there to render them this delicate service. She seemed pleased, however, with the good turn she had already done them and even disposed to continue the benevolent work. I looked at her hard, with a perceptible headshake, trying to communicate in this way the fact that nothing had come of my attack on Mrs. Goldie; and she smiled back as if to say, "Oh, no matter; I daresay I shall think of something now."

Wilmerding struck me as rather less miserable than I had expected; though of course I knew that he was the man to make an heroic effort not to appear miserable. He immediately proposed that we should all go home with him to luncheon; upon which Veronica said, hesitating with responsibility, "Do you suppose, for me, mamma will mind?" Her intended made no reply to this; his silence was almost a suggestion that if she were in doubt she had perhaps better go home. But Mrs. Rushbrook settled the question by declaring that it was, on the contrary, exactly what mamma would like. Besides, was not she, Mrs. Rushbrook, the most satisfactory of duennas? We walked slowly together to Wilmerding's villa, and I was not surprised at his allowing me complete possession of Veronica. He fell behind us with Mrs. Rushbrook and succeeded, at any rate, in shaking off his gloom sufficiently to manifest the proper elation at her having consented to partake of his hospitality. As I moved beside Veronica I wondered whether she had an incipient sense that it was to me she owed her sudden prospect of a husband. I think she must have wondered to what she owed it. I said nothing to awaken that conjecture: I didn't even allude to her engagement—much less did I utter hollow words of congratulation. She had a right to expect something of that sort, and my silence disconcerted her and made her stiff. She felt important now, and she was the kind of girl who likes to show the importance that she feels. I was sorry for her—it was not *her* fault, poor child—but I couldn't flatly lie to her, couldn't tell her I was "delighted." I was conscious that she was waiting for me to speak, and I was even

afraid that she would end by asking me if I didn't know what had happened to her. Her pride, however, kept her from this, and I continued to be dumb and to pity her—to pity her the more as I was sure her mystification would not be cleared up by any revelation in regard to my visit to her mother. Mrs. Goldie would never tell her of that.

Our extemporised repast at Wilmerding's was almost merry; our sociability healed my soreness and I forgot for the moment that I had grounds of discomposure. Wilmerding had always the prettiest courtesy in his own house, with pressing, preoccupied, literal ways of playing the master, and Mrs. Rushbrook enjoyed anything that was unexpected and amusingly irregular. Our carriage was in waiting, to convey us back to Albano, and we offered our companions a lift, as it was time for Wilmerding to take Veronica home. We put them down at the gate of Mrs. Goldie's villa, after I had noticed the doubled-dyed sweetness with which Mrs. Rushbrook said to Veronica, as the carriage stopped: "You must bring him over to Albano to return my visit." This was spoken in my interest, but even then the finished feminine hypocrisy of it made me wince a little. I should have winced still more had I foreseen what was to follow.

Mrs. Rushbrook was silent during much of the rest of our drive. She had begun by saying, "Now that I see them together I understand what you mean"; and she had also requested me to tell her all I could about poor Wilmerding—his situation in life, his character, his family, his history, his prospects—since, if she were really to go into the matter, she must have the facts in her hand. When I had told her everything I knew, she sat turning my instructions over in her mind, as she looked vaguely at the purple Campagna: she was lovely with that expression. I intimated to her that there was very little time to lose: every day that we left him in his predicament he would sink deeper and be more difficult to extricate.

"Don't you like him—don't you think he's worthy to marry some woman he is really fond of?" I remember asking.

Her answer was rather short: "Oh yes, he's a good creature." But before we reached Albano she said to me, "And is he really rich?"

"I don't know what you call 'really'—I only wish I had his pocket-money."

"And is he generous—free-handed?"

"Try him and you'll see."

"How can I try him?"

"Well then, ask Mrs. Goldie."

"Perhaps he'd pay to get off," mused Mrs. Rushbrook.

"Oh, they'd ask a fortune!"

"Well, he's perfect to her." And Mrs. Rushbrook repeated that he was a good creature.

That afternoon I rode back to Rome, having reminded my friend at Albano that I gave her *carte-blanche* and that delay would not improve matters. We had a little discussion about this, she maintaining, as a possible view, that if one left the affair alone a rupture would come of itself.

"Why should it come when, as you say, he's perfect?"

"Yes, he's very provoking," said Mrs. Rushbrook: which made me laugh as I got into the saddle.

HENRY JAMES.

ROBERT BROWNING.

IN MEMORIAM.

THOSE who have frequently seen our revered and beloved friend during the past year will hardly join in the general chorus of surprise which has greeted the death of one so strong in appearance and so hale and green. Rather with these there will be a faint sort of congratulation that such a life, so manifestly waning in essential vigour, should have been spared the indignities of decline, the "cold gradations of decay." For a year past no close observer could have doubted that the robustness which seemed still invincible in the summer of 1888 was rudely shaken. Cold upon cold left the poet weaker; the recuperative power was rapidly and continuously on the decrease. But a little while ago, and to think of Mr. Browning and of illness together seemed impossible. It is a singular fact that he who felt so keenly for human suffering had scarcely known, by experience, what physical pain was. The vigour, the exemption from feebleness, which marks his literary genius, accompanied the man as well. I recollect his giving a picturesque account of a headache he suffered from, once, in St. Petersburg, about the year 1833! Who amongst us is fortunate enough to remember his individual headaches? I seem to see him now, about six years ago, standing in the east wind on the door-step of his house in Warwick Crescent, declaring with emphasis that he felt ill, really ill, more ill than he had felt for half a century, and looking all the while, in spite of that indisposition, a monument of sturdy health. Even his decline has been the reluctant fall of a wholesome and well-balanced being. Painlessly, without intellectual obscuration, demanding none of that pity that he deprecated, he falls asleep in Italy, faint indeed, yet, to the very last, pursuing.

Since those we love must pass away; since the light must sooner or later sink in the lantern, there is, perhaps, no better way than this. We may repeat of him what Sir Thomas Browne said of his friend, "We have missed not our desires in his soft departure, which was scarce an expiration."

It is natural in these first moments to think more of the man than of his works. The latter remain with us, and coming generations will comprehend them better than we do. But our memories of the former, though far less salient, have this importance—that they will pass away with us. Every hour henceforward makes the man more shadowy. We must condense our recollections, if they are not to prove wholly volatile and fugitive. In these few pages, then, I shall mainly strive to contribute my pencil-sketch to the gallery of portraits which will be preserved. He was so many-sided that there may be room for any picture of him that is quite sincere and personal, however slight it may prove; and in the case of Mr. Browning, far more than of most men of genius, the portrait may be truly and boldly drawn without offence. There is no prominent feature of character which has to be slurred over, no trick or foible to be concealed. No man ever showed a more handsome face to private friendship, no one disappointed or repelled less, no one, upon intimate acquaintance, required less to be apologised for or explained away.

There have been many attempts to describe Mr. Browning as a talker in society. One of the best, from the pen of an accomplished observer, appeared last autumn in the NEW REVIEW. But his private conversation was a very different thing from his talk over the dinner-table or in a picture-gallery. It was a very much finer phenomenon, and one which tallied far better with the noble breadth of his genius. To a single listener, with whom he was on familiar terms, the Browning of his own study was to the Browning of a dinner party as a tiger is to a domestic cat. In such conversation his natural strength came out. His talk assumed the volume and the tumult of a cascade. His voice rose to a shout, sank to a whisper, ran up and down the gamut of conversational melody. Those whom he was expecting will never forget his welcome, the loud trumpet-note from the other end of the passage, the talk

already in full flood at a distance of twenty feet. Then, in his own study or drawing-room, what he loved was to capture the visitor in a low armchair's "sofa-lap of leather," and from a most unfair vantage of height to tyrannise, to walk around the victim, in front, behind, on this side, on that, weaving magic circles, now with gesticulating arms thrown high, now grovelling on the floor to find some reference in a folio, talking all the while, a redundant turmoil of thoughts, fancies, and reminiscences flowing from those generous lips. To think of it is to conjure up an image of intellectual vigour, armed at every point, but overflowing, none the less, with the geniality of strength.

The last time that the present writer enjoyed one of these never-to-be-forgotten talks was on the earliest Sunday in June last summer. For the first time since many years Mr. Browning was in Cambridge, and he was much fêted. He proposed a temporary retreat from too full society, and we retired alone to the most central and sequestered part of the beautiful Fellows' Garden of Trinity. A little tired and silent at first, he was no sooner well ensconced under the shadow of a tree, in a garden-chair, than his tongue became unloosed. The blue sky was cloudless above, summer foliage hemmed us round in a green mist, a pink mountain of a double-may in blossom rose in front. We were close to a hot shrub of sweetbriar that exhaled its balm in the sunshine. Commonly given to much gesticulation, the poet sat quite still on this occasion; and, the perfect quiet being only broken by his voice, the birds lost fear and came closer and closer, curiously peeping. So we sat for more than two hours, and I could but note what I had had opportunity to note before, that although, on occasion, he could be so accurate an observer of nature, it was not instinctive with him to observe. In the blaze of summer, with all the life of birds and insects moving around us, he did not borrow an image or direct an allusion to any natural fact about us.

He sat and talked of his own early life and aspirations; how he marvelled, as he looked back, at the audacious obstinacy which had made him, when a youth, determine to be a poet and nothing but a poet. He remarked that all his life long he had never known what it was to have to do a certain thing to-day and not to-morrow; he

thought this had led to superabundance of production, since, on looking back, he could see that he had often, in his unfettered leisure, been afraid to do nothing. Then, with complete frankness, he described the long-drawn desolateness of his early and middle life as a literary man; how, after certain spirits had seemed to rejoice in his first sprightly runnings, and especially in *Paracelsus*, a blight had fallen upon his very admirers. He touched, with a slight irony, on "the entirely unintelligible *Sordello*," and the forlorn hope of *Bells and Pomegranates*. Then he fell, more in the habitual manner of old men, to stories of early loves and hatreds, Italian memories of the forties, stories with names in them that meant nothing to his ignorant listener. And, in the midst of these reminiscences, a chord of extreme interest to the critic was touched. For in recounting a story of some Tuscan nobleman who had shown him two exquisite miniature-paintings, the work of a young artist who should have received for them the prize in some local contest, and who, being unjustly defrauded, broke his ivories, burned his brushes, and indignantly foreswore the thankless art for ever, Mr. Browning suddenly reflected that there was, as he said, "stuff for a poem" in that story, and immediately with extreme vivacity began to sketch the form it should take, the suppression of what features and the substitution of what others were needful; and finally suggested the non-obvious or inverted moral of the whole, in which the act of spirited defiance was shown to be, really, an act of tame renunciation, the poverty of the artist's spirit being proved in his eagerness to snatch, even though it was by honest merit, a benefit simply material. The poet said, distinctly, that he had never before reflected on this incident as one proper to be versified; the speed, therefore, with which the creative architect laid the foundations, built the main fabric, and even put on the domes and pinnacles of his poem was, no doubt, of uncommon interest. He left it, in five minutes, needing nothing but the mere outward crust of the versification. It will be a matter of some curiosity to see whether the poem so started and sketched was actually brought to completion.

It cannot have escaped the notice of anyone who knew Robert Browning well, and who compares him in thought with other men of genius whom he may have known, that it was not his strength

only, his vehement and ever-eruptive force, that distinguished him, but to an almost equal extent his humanity. Of all great poets, except (one fancies) Chaucer, he must have been the most accessible. It is almost a necessity with imaginative genius of a very high order to require support from without: sympathy, admiration, amusement, must be constantly poured in to balance the creative evaporation. But Mr. Browning demanded no such tribute. He rather hastened forward with both hands full of entertainment for the new-comer, anxious to please rather than hoping to be pleased. The most part of men of genius look upon an unknown comer as certainly a bore and probably an enemy, but to Robert Browning the whole world was full of vague possibilities of friendship. No one resented more keenly an unpleasant specimen of humanity, no one could snub more royally at need, no one was—certain premises being established—more ruthless in administering the *coup de grâce;* but then his surprise gave weight to his indignation. He had assumed a new acquaintance to be a good fellow, and behold! against all ordinary experience, he had turned out to be a bore or a sneak. Sudden, irreparable chastisement must fall on one who had proved the poet'soptimism to be at fault. And, to those who shared a nearer intimacy than genial acquaintanceship could offer, is there one left to-day who was disappointed in his Browning or had any deep fault to find with him as a friend? Surely, no! He was human to the core, red with warm blood to the centre of his being; and if he erred, as he occasionally did—as lately, to the sorrow of all who knew him, he did err—it was the judgment not the instinct that was amiss. He was a poet, after all, and not a philosopher.

It was part of Mr. Browning's large optimism, of his splendid and self-sufficing physical temperament, that he took his acquaintances easily—it might almost be said superficially. His poetic creations crowded out the real world to a serious extent. With regard to living men and women he was content to speculate, but with the children of his brain the case was different. These were not the subjects of more or less indolent conjecture, but of absolute knowledge. It must be ten years ago, but the impression of the incident is as fresh upon me as though it happened yesterday, that Mr. Browning passed from